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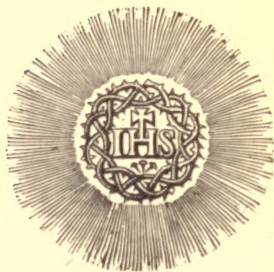




COLL. CHRISTI REGIS S.J.  
BIB. MAJOR  
TORONTO

SELECT LETTERS  
OF OUR  
VERY REVEREND  
FATHERS GENERAL

TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS  
OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS



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# SELECT LETTERS OF OUR FATHERS GENERAL.

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## I.

A LETTER OF ST. IGNATIUS ON THE MEANS OF PROMOTING THE  
CAUSE OF RELIGION, ESPECIALLY IN UPPER AND LOWER  
GERMANY.

As our Society has been destined by divine Providence to be one of the most powerful instruments for repairing the evils of heresy, it seems to me that the rapid progress made by the heretics in spreading the poison of their evil doctrine, and the new measures which they are taking day by day to advance their interests, should make us solicitous to provide remedies not only good in themselves, but of ready and far-reaching application. Especially among the Northern nations would these remedies enable us speedily to preserve what is still sound, and to cure what is already infested by the plague of heresy.

Two causes have contributed largely to the spread of this moral evil. First, the heretics have made their false theology popular by adapting it to the intelligence of the common people, and by teaching in the schools and preaching in public. By circulating small books, cheap and easily understood they have spread their doctrine ; and thus the baneful influence of error has extended to those places, where the ministers of error would not be allowed to enter. Secondly, the bad example and ignorance of the Catholics themselves, but more particularly that of the clergy, together with the negligence of the appointed pastors of the flocks of Christ have brought untold havoc and ruin on the pastures of the Lord. Wherefore, it seems to me our Society should oppose these heretics by the following means, and thus supply a remedy for the evils, which, through their agency, have come upon the Church.

In the first place, besides the complete course of studies taught in our scholasticates, let there be established a short course of theology. The reason for this is obvious. The complete course, presupposing a foundation in philosophy, occupies long years of study, and is suited only for the more talented students. The following of this course of studies would beget only confusion in the minds of the less talented, who, therefore, would derive from it but little profit.

In this shorter course, essential matters not now in controversy could be treated briefly, while points of controversy could be developed at length in a manner adapted to the present needs of the people. Dogma should be proved by solid arguments drawn from Scripture, Tradition, the Councils, and the Fathers; and at the same time contrary doctrines should be refuted. A short time would suffice to complete a course of studies of this kind, since outside questions would receive but brief and passing attention. The result of this course would be the preparation of a number of theologians ready to devote themselves to the work of preaching and teaching. The abler students are to give themselves with all care and diligence to the higher and fuller course; but those, however, to whom this more complete course proves profitless, should be withdrawn from it and applied to the studies of the shorter course.

The principle points of doctrine treated in this course might be taught to the children in the same catechetical manner as the Christian doctrine is taught at the present day. And provided they are not too deeply infected with the taint of heresy, the unlettered, who are incapable of grasping the finer distinctions of deeper studies, might also be instructed in these same leading heads of doctrine. Indeed, this same method could be followed in the Lower Grammar classes of our colleges by having the pupils commit these truths to memory. For the students of the higher classes, the first, and perhaps the second, as well as for the students in the art and the theological departments, it would be well to have a lecture on this compendium of theology at some free hour each

day, in order that all those, who have an aptitude for it, may be instructed in the foundations of their religion and thus be enabled to teach and preach the Catholic doctrine, and to refute the popular errors of the day. This practice should be adopted in our colleges of Upper and Lower Germany, in France, and in other places where the same need exists. With regard to those unfitted for the higher studies, either from lack of ability or advanced age, it would be enough for them in order to become good and useful laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, that besides the study of languages they devote themselves to this compendium of theology and to solving cases of conscience. To this lecture in theology we may admit the secular clergy, students in the higher classes of other schools, and as many as would wish to avail themselves of its advantages. Thus an antidote for the poison of heresy would be quickly spread in many places; for from the lectures and from the text-books upon which the lectures are based the students could gather ample matter for preaching to the people and teaching in schools, where classes of Christian doctrine are held. A broadcast sowing of colleges and schools of the Society, especially where there is likelihood of an encouraging attendance, would be an excellent means of gathering a plentiful harvest for the Church in her present time of need. Wherefore, even though we be constrained to depart, in some instances, from the requirements of our Institute in regard to the number of students necessary for a college, we might undertake the charge of a school without assuming the strict obligation of a college. But even in this case, there should be one of Ours, or at least, an extern, to teach the short course of theology, to preach solid Catholic doctrine to the people, and to promote their spiritual welfare by the administration of the sacraments.

Our more advanced Scholastics could teach the Christian doctrine on Sundays and holydays not only where there are houses of the Society, but even in the neighboring country villages. Even our students, if any show themselves competent for the work, could be sent by the Rector to discharge the same office. Thus by sound



learning, the example of a good life, and the avoidance of every appearance of avarice we could refute the strongest argument used against us by the heretics, namely, the scandalous life and ignorance of our Catholic clergy.

The twofold aim of the heretics is to weaken the position of the Catholics and to undermine the influence of the Society. For this they use the medium of pamphlets and tracts to disseminate their false doctrine. Hence, I deem it expedient that, when these heretical works appear, Ours should publish short, and well written treatises on points of Catholic doctrine as an immediate corrective for the evil effects of these false publications. Thus sound Catholic principles would be established, and heretical ones overthrown. These various articles might be collected and put together in one volume. Men well versed in theology should be the authors of these rejoinders, which should ever be adapted to the intelligence of the average reader. The style should be forceful and popularly attractive. Yet even while holding up to public condemnation the evil tendencies and deceits of our adversaries, the tone of our writers should ever be one of dignified self-restraint.

It seems to me that, by these means we could render a great service to the Church ; for thus we should be counteracting the poison of heresy in the first stages, before its advanced development would make the removal of it more difficult. In the cure of this disease use the same diligence as the heretics employ in spreading it. We have that which they can never have, sound, and, therefore, abiding doctrine.

The most talented students could make a thorough course of studies at the Roman College, or in some college of Upper or Lower Germany, or in France. Thence they would return to the different places where Ours reside to become the directors and teachers of others.

*Aug. 18, 1554.*

*(Probable date.)*

## II.

AN INSTRUCTION OF ST. IGNATIUS TO THE FATHERS AT PRAGUE  
ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR OPENING A COLLEGE IN THAT  
CITY.<sup>(1)</sup>

We should have before our mind the accomplishment of a three-fold object in Prague: the spiritual improvement of both city and kingdom: the preservation and growth of Ours in number, learning, and spirit; and, lastly, a secure, permanent, and liberal foundation for the college, whereby God, our Lord, may be better served in our endeavors to aid our neighbor and improve ourselves.

## THE SPIRITUAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE CITY AND KINGDOM.

We ought to have a due care and solicitude not only to preserve the Catholics in their faith and to further their spiritual progress, but, also, to win over the numerous heretics and schismatics, who are there, and lead them back to holy Church and the way of salvation.

<sup>(1)</sup> To understand better some of the counsels and warnings which the charity, zeal, and prudence of St. Ignatius prompted him to give the Fathers at Prague, it may be well to recall to mind that of all the Northern European countries the one most deeply infected with heresy was Bohemia. And it was for Bohemia's spiritual welfare that a college was started at Prague.

The whole country had been convulsed by the teachings of John Huss and Jerome of Prague. When the first excitement had somewhat abated, smaller voices were heard, disagreeing it is true, among themselves, yet heretically harmonious against the Catholic Church. The principal ones were the Bohemian Brethren and the Utraquists.

Charveriat in his "Les affaires religieuses en Bohême au seizième siècle" says that the moral condition of the Bohemian Catholics was low; the clergy, especially, being ignorant and corrupt. But Fr. Boero in his "Vita del B. Pietro Canisio" gives the testimony of Blessed Peter himself to the fact that, in general the people were of good and simple lives, and though they practised Utraquism, in all other matters they were strict adherents to Catholic rites and observances. The clergy, though few in number, were zealous and labored hard to preserve the purity of the faith.

For more exact details of the religious condition of Bohemia, consult Schmidl's *Historia Provinciæ Bohemæ*; a conveniently short and clear account is given in Brueck's "History of the Catholic Church," Vol. II. P. 3, § 149.

The ordinary means for assisting these two classes of persons are the following : first, a holy desire and zeal for the divine honor and the salvation of their souls. This yearning desire and ardent zeal will give birth to frequent and fervent prayer. In the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, though we may have other intentions yet this one should ever find a place,—the offering of Christ crucified to the Eternal Father for the salvation of the inhabitants of this city and kingdom. The example of our lives and the practice of every Christian virtue will have a great influence on those, who become acquainted with us, to embrace our faith and to shape their manner of acting according to our own.

Those of Ours, who are good conversationalists, could use this gift to best advantage by meeting persons of authority and learning and striving to bring them over to the divine service ; for these persons by reason of their position can exert a wide influence for good on those around them. Hence, superiors should take great care not only in determining who should converse with externs, but, also, in selecting those, who should meet the different classes of people with whom we come in contact.

The first week of the Spiritual Exercises may be given to many ; but the other weeks are to be given to those only, who, from their conversation and intercourse with us, are likely to draw profit therefrom.

Preaching in Latin or German, or in both these tongues, will prove serviceable until such time as it can be done in Bohemian. Our preachers should aim rather at establishing Catholic dogmas than refuting the false doctrines of the sectaries, that thereby we may not, at the very outset of our labors, antagonize the minds of men. For, whilst we prove our Catholic teachings, we combat most effectually the tenets of the heretics. Our charity and zeal for the salvation of heretics and schismatics should be unfeigned. Hence, we should eschew all heated and fruitless disputation ; still, if there be some sect with few followers and of little influence, there would be less objection to preaching openly against it.

If you have a class of hearers who could derive profit from them,



lectures may be given on Scholastic Theology. First, see what books are to be used, and whether it would be well to adopt Dr. Canisius' Compendium of Theology, the Master of the Sentences, or some other Doctor suited to the time and place. On this point ask advice in Vienna or Prague. In refuting the doctrines opposed to Catholic teaching, bear in mind what has been already said about preaching, namely, to avoid every appearance of wrangling, and to exhibit towards all sentiments of the deepest charity.

There could be a lecture also on Holy Scripture, choosing that portion which in the judgment of the learned will seem most to your purpose. With regard to the manner of treating the subject, consider whether you are to adapt it to theological students or to the people; or whether it would not be well to devote a part of the lecture-hour to an exhortation or sermon. In all this, keep carefully in view what has been said above about the way of combating heretical opinions.

See whether it would not be advisable to explain the Christian doctrine in German or Latin to the students and common people. This could be done in one or more schools, and in the church on festivals or other days of the week. Let the catechism be one that the children and simple folk can buy and understand and commit to memory. The same remark applies to our own students. I think that Dr. Canisius has already composed a work of this kind.

If circumstances warrant the undertaking, conferences might be held for the solution of cases of conscience.

With regard to classes, it seems to me that three would be enough for the present. One would be for those who are somewhat advanced, and are able to follow the Latin explanations of the master; the second, for the study of rhetoric and the more difficult authors; the third, devoted to Greek and Hebrew. This last named class should be held at an hour when the students of the other two classes may be present. It does not appear advisable as yet to assign teachers or to open a class for the smaller children, partly because we have no masters who understand Bohemian, and partly that the college may be placed on a higher plane and thus have

greater authority. Besides, by acting thus, we should excite a stronger desire to have Ours undertake the office of instructing the young.

Have frequent discussions on controverted points, carried on, however with due moderation and prudence. Students are to be well drilled in composition. At the same time great care is to be taken that they advance in piety as well as learning. On Sundays, as is customary here in Rome, one of the students should deliver a public discourse on some subject selected by the professor, whose duty also it shall be to correct and revise these compositions. For subject matter, choose some edifying question bearing on religion or Christian morals. From time to time there may be public dialogues, readings of verse, or speeches, after the manner which now obtains at Rome, to help to encourage the students, give pleasure to their parents, and secure a reputation for the college. Students of all ranks will be received, provided they are willing to be decorous and submit to our discipline and regulations. Use every effort to do away with immodest talk, oaths, blasphemies, and other bad habits.

Let Ours attend to pious works, such as visiting prisons and hospitals, to relieve the spiritual, and as far as possible, the bodily needs of the inmates. In general, they are to exercise all the works of mercy conformably to the Institute of the Society.

With regard to heretics and schismatics, take care to be armed against them with sound doctrine. Know well the fundamental arguments against their errors, that you may employ them in due time and place with that loving dexterity which serves so powerfully to recall the erring to the Catholic faith.

Those who say that they receive holy Communion under both species by special permission from the Church, are not to be refused absolution, if it be ascertained that they speak the truth and are, in other respects, good Catholics. If they are our students, it will be well to have them observe the custom of going to confession every month, of hearing daily Mass, and of following out such other college regulations as appear suitable to their age and condi-

tion. Communion, however, must not be given them in our church, unless they be persuaded to receive under one form. Those who are discovered holding some error opposed to Catholic teaching, or who have not the permission necessary to excuse them from sin in communicating under both species, are not to be absolved. This point must be insisted upon. In other matters, however, show them the greatest charity and strive, in every possible way, to win them over. It is more than probable that the young, who are guileless and free from malice, will easily allow themselves to be led back to the right path.

Impress upon Catholics the duty of observing the precepts of the Church touching abstinence, fasting, and other matters. Condescend, however, to their weakness as if to children, and therefore make all possible concessions.

On all these points, it would be of service to know the mind of His Royal Majesty and of his counsellors. Confer with Ours in Vienna and with Dr. Canisius, who should by all means be present at the opening of the college. To him and to the Rector with his Consultors, I leave the decision as to the manner of carrying out these instructions.

#### THE PRESERVATION AND GROWTH OF OURS IN NUMBER, LEARNING, AND SPIRIT.

The more deeply religious Ours become, the fitter instruments they will be for promoting the spiritual welfare of others. Wherefore, let each one purify his intention, and seek, not the things that are his own, but the things that are Jesus Christ's. In whatsoever offices they are employed, be they high or low, all should have an earnest desire and resolve to acquit themselves in a manner becoming true and faithful servants of God, our Lord, by submitting themselves with true abnegation of their own will and judgment to the government of God through obedience. Let them in their prayers beg this grace from God, the Giver of every good



gift, and for the same end the Rector should give them the directions herein prescribed, and add other helpful ones of his own.

They shall observe the custom, which obtains at Rome, of confessing every eight days, of examining their conscience, and of hearing Mass. The same is to be said with regard to the time of prayer and the other rules in force here, in so far as they can be adapted to the College of Prague. In this matter there will be need of discretion. Get the opinion, therefore, of those of Ours who are most familiar with affairs in Germany, and send me a copy of whatever new regulations are made.

At home, now, one, now another shall preach in the refectory during dinner. For the preparation of this exercise not more than an hour is to be allowed. Occasionally they shall preach extemporaneously on the subject assigned them, either in Latin or German, or in Bohemian, when they shall have learned that language. Let them endeavor to acquire a style of preaching calculated to convince and move their audiences. In this matter Dr. Canisius will give such directions as he deems proper. The Scholastics should press forward with eagerness, under the guidance of their professors and superiors, in the acquirement of learning. Let them practice with conscientious diligence to become ready in discussion and easy in composition. They should be free from all work about the house, and therefore it would be well, if a servant were hired in Prague to attend to the kitchen, store-room, and the like household duties. Still, as is the custom here in Rome, they should take some part in menial employments at times that do not interfere with study.

The professors will be the two doctors, Tiliano and Henry ; the former of theology, the latter of Holy Scripture and Hebrew. Master William will teach rhetoric and Greek, and Master Peter Silvio the class of humanities, provided of course that some other arrangement does not seem better in the beginning. Dr. Henry is to be Chancellor and Prefect of Studies.

Let care be taken to preserve Ours in good health and strength to bear the trying labors of the divine service. Wherefore, the

Rector must not allow them to fatigue themselves too much in their studies, or even in their devotions, but must regulate all according to each one's strength of mind and body. Let them by their example and their manner of dealing and conversing with externs, gain a good reputation for the Society, make themselves beloved by all, and worthy of being esteemed and accounted true servants of God.

Careful attention is to be given in Prague itself, and throughout Bohemia, to gaining over to Christ for the divine service and the help of souls new recruits, who are already possessed of talent, or give hopes of developing it later on. But none of our students are to be received into the Society without the consent of those who have the charge of them. In the event of a refusal, such applicants are to be exhorted to persevere in their pious desires, to make frequent use of the sacraments, and to strive in the meantime to obtain the permission which has been withheld.

The Rector may have two or three Consultors. In my judgment these should be the two Doctors and Peter Silvio.

#### THE PERMANENT AND LIBERAL FOUNDATION OF THE COLLEGE.

The more firmly the college is established by the spiritual bettering of the city and kingdom, and by our own growth in number, learning, and holiness, the more extensive will the college prove its usefulness for the common good.

Arrange with the king for sufficient assurance and guarantee that the Dominican Friars who are vacating their convent for us, will be put in secure possession of the revenues of the house they are about to occupy.

See that the income to be applied to the new college be made as secure and as large as possible, that we may be the better able to maintain a good number of subjects who may be won over to the Society in that country, or who may be sent there from Rome or other places.



Everyone shall have his own bed, books, and other necessary articles whether for common or private use, so that nothing may be wanting in what regards their maintenance, health, or studies.

To accomplish all this, strive to retain and increase the good will of His Royal Majesty, that of the city, and, in a word, of all who may be most able to help us. Agree to what may prove acceptable to them, and coöperate to the best of your ability in all that can promote the greater glory of God. Endeavor to maintain and increase the esteem these persons entertain for us, so that they may recognize that the Society is ever advancing, and not receding from its first fervor.

Consider whether it would not be expedient to have our temporal affairs managed by externs rather than by ourselves. If, however, we retain the administration of them, let it be carried on in such wise that it may be readily seen,—as is really the case—that we are actuated only by a desire of the public good, and not by any greed of worldly possessions.

Write to Rome at least once a month, and to the other colleges of Germany as often as shall be agreed upon among yourselves.

*Rome,*

*February 12, 1556.*

### III.

A LETTER OF ST. FRANCIS BORGIA TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE PROVINCE OF AQUITANIA, ON THE MEANS OF PRESERVING THE SPIRIT OF THE SOCIETY AND OF OUR VOCATION.

The arrival of the Fathers Procurators has given me an occasion for very great joy and comfort in our Lord ; for their report has forcibly brought home to me the singular providence with which the Divine Majesty guards and multiplies the fruits of His vineyard, which, although only lately planted, has already spread its branches to the sea.

In its rapid growth it reminds one of the little grain of mustard, which, fixing its roots firmly in the ground, and sending forth its branch and stem, becomes in a short time a mighty tree. To the Almighty Father, Who has shown such love and favor towards us His children, we must therefore give unceasing praise and thanksgiving ; for by His grace our work thrives beyond our most sanguine expectations ; and, what is still more remarkable, our very errors arouse our watchfulness, while our misfortunes become for us a source of gain. Blessed be His holy name, Who in these evil days has set apart this vineyard of the Society for such noble work. Blessed be His holy name, who does not cease to shower upon it His heavenly benefits, that it may increase the marvellous fruitfulness of which we ourselves are witnesses ; a fruitfulness which the Divine Mercy seems to assure unto us, since at its very planting He was so prodigal of His blessings.

But there is reason to fear that when the harvests of our vineyard have matured, greater and more deadly will be the envy, more emboldened the malice of that foe, who never rests in his work of destruction. For this reason we must be on our guard. We must not open the smallest avenue to this sower of cockle from whom our harvest has everything to fear.

In order, therefore, to satisfy my official obligations and the dut-

ies of charity, in order to preclude the blame which silence would deserve, I have deemed it expedient to advise you of a few things, the necessity of which may not at present appear, though the remembrance of them, I think, will one day be helpful. God's graces are always to be so received, that the measure of their abundance should be the measure also of our fear of ingratitude. "Blessed is the man that is always fearful."<sup>(1)</sup> I wish then to point out to you some of those snares which our most crafty enemy employs in order to circumvent and ruin us, when we are off our guard and do not oppose him by a vigorous resistance. "He who is forewarned," as the old proverb has it, "is also forearmed." As poisonous weeds may be introduced into the harvest fields in many different ways, so evils can creep into our Society. I think we should fear especially a remissness in the spirit of our Constitutions regarding the admission of postulants. For be assured that, if we proceed herein in any other spirit than that which our Constitutions require, we shall throw open the door to utter ruin. And really, if with entire disregard for the spirit of the vocation with which one presents himself to us, we consider only his learning and other accomplishments, the day will come when the Society will find itself rich indeed in numbers, but sadly destitute of the spirit and virtue that should animate its members. Hence it is, that there arise in the hearts of some among us that ambition and that ungovernable pride which will endure no curb and will brook no interference.

Such members will, indeed, have friends and money in abundance, but if they will only look into themselves, they will see that they are poor and naked and destitute of the truest wealth, which consists in the possession of solid virtues and of other spiritual gifts. Therefore let that be the first counsel, and let it be written in the head of the book, lest on some future day experience teach us (and would that it had not already given us the lesson!) what right reasoning so easily proves.

Since men enter the Society under the impulse of divine grace,

<sup>(1)</sup> Prov. xxviii., 14.

it is our duty to help them in their vocation, to secure their perseverance by inculcating submission of intellect, and to apply them seriously to all the exercises of the noviceship. A good novice will make a good scholastic ; but if the foundation is neglected his case will be similar to that of the unsettled edifice, which, because it was not solidly founded, will collapse and involve in its ruin the loss of all the labor spent upon it. Such a novice will either leave us at the end of his studies, or, should he remain in the Society, will never edify others, or be of any service to religion.

That ill-advised hastiness of Superiors in removing from the noviceship subjects, who have not yet acquired the necessary maturity is always a cause of positive evil. But let us be persuaded that the enemy of our vineyard is never sleeping, although we ourselves may not be awake to this serious evil. We must, therefore, consider as most profitably employed that time which is given to the education and formation of a useful laborer in the vineyard of the Lord. This employment is so excellent and so important that in order to signify the perfection which it requires, our Saviour was unwilling to begin His preaching before the age of thirty ; although His wisdom was not less perfect at the moment of His conception than at His thirtieth year. This example should convince us of the wisdom that inspired the experiments in use in the Society.

Indeed, these experiments furnish everyone with an accurate means of testing his strength to subdue his inordinate passions. Should anyone, however, presume to treat with the men of this world before having brought his passions under control, far from reaping any advantage, he will bring about his own certain ruin. The Lord threatened Moses, as he was about to go into Egypt, because he had not circumcised his children ; giving us to understand thereby, that intercourse with the world is more injurious than profitable to an uncircumcised, that is, an unmortified man. If the novice, during his probation, does not take advantage of the summer months, and, like the busy ant, heap up provisions for winter ; if he seeks not his support and safeguard in obedience and



humility and patience, but especially, in the fixed purpose of despising self, and, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, of following Christ crucified even unto death, so surely will he find himself tossed about when the winter of distress and the tempest of temptation break upon him. With reason then do we call the novitiate the novices' Bethlehem. For it is there that he receives the bread of the word of God. It is there that he gathers the provisions necessary in traversing the dangerous sea of life, until he arrives in the port of the Land of Promise, which is the heavenly Jerusalem. Therefore the novice who is penetrated with this truth, is pained and in distress when called out of the novitiate; for he recognizes how poorly he has provided himself with virtue, which is the bread and the provision needed to bring him safely to his journey's end.

But as for those who long for the end of their probation, or who rejoice at its close, it is painfully evident that they little reckon how important it is that they be completely provided for their future labors. They show that they have been little solicitous about the result of the combat, who rush into it without preparation and without arms. Of this they may be assured, and would to God that the advice were unnecessary, that they are preparing for themselves many a bitter disappointment, if they do not now provide for the day when they shall be sent forth into the colleges to give themselves to study, and if they have not firmly grounded themselves in religious humility. For "knowledge puffeth up,"<sup>(2)</sup> and it is from this kind of knowledge and its fruits that are born self-esteem, self-will, diversity of opinion, and, what is sadder still, rancor among fellow-students and, consequently, division amongst our Fathers and Brothers. Alas! for him who on entering upon his new career is obliged to notice and correct the faults of others before he is ready and able to detect his own. Alas! for him who through an insatiable desire of learning does not employ part of his time in gathering some spiritual fruit from his studies. How different shall be the career of those, who having placed all their

(2) I Cor. viii., 1.



love in Him from Whom alone come knowledge and wisdom, reap from that same labor the richest harvest.

And, indeed, our only aim in studying should be to acquire a clearer, fuller knowledge of the majesty and goodness and wisdom of the Creator, and to bind ourselves to Him by a more ardent and a more active love. If this seems difficult to anyone let him but address himself to the task and he will behold every difficulty disappear. Martha and Mary were sisters although their spheres of life were different; so also study and piety, although their objects are different, ought to go hand in hand. For they are in no wise incompatible when one rightly applies himself to each. A striking example of this, as well as of many other virtues, is furnished us by Father Laynez, of holy memory, who united in the most admirable manner a profound knowledge with the true interior spirit, and especially the spirit of consummate charity and humility.

Most unhappy will be the fate of him who becomes more forgetful of his own nothingness, as he more zealously devotes himself to study; for even among the sages of paganism knowledge and contempt of self were inculcated as the foundation of the philosophy which they cultivated. With all truth, then, can I say that the scholastic who becomes infatuated with his own ideas and with a sense of his own importance instead of humbling and despising himself, does not really grasp what he studies, and unlearns more than he learns. It clearly follows, therefore, from what has been said that it is of the first importance to lay up an abundant store of virtue. If the house be built on sand, what can be expected but utter ruin when the storm of ambition and vanity breaks violently upon it. And because we have not in our own hearts the peace of the Lord there arises in us a restlessness of spirit which renders us troublesome and disagreeable to others. Hence also arise those complaints, those murmurs, those antipathies of persons of one nation for those of another, those dissensions amongst brethren, and, what is far worse, estrangement from superiors, because we are neglected by them in the distribution of offices and positions of trust. By such conduct we clearly prove

that we are wanting in the very knowledge of what religious profession implies ; for we turn it from its real end and under a false idea of piety make it the stepping-stone to honors and dignities and repose, and, in a word, to greater privileges. Alas, how sad is this error ! Such religious seem to me in the same case with those invalids for whom the physician prescribes a remedy, but who go to sleep without tasting it ; forgetting that their condition will be worse on the morrow, no matter how long they hold the dose in their hand, if they do not finally drink it. And so it is with those who do not strive to attain the end of their profession ; instead of profiting them it will only prove their ruin. For the aim of the religious is that each one may work zealously in the vineyard of the Lord ; that he may be more obedient, more submissive, more humble ; that he may become a more fitting instrument for the help of his neighbor and give him an example of more perfect virtue. For to them that follow in His footsteps by a religious profession did Christ say : “ You are the light of the world.” <sup>(3)</sup>

Hence it may be easily seen, as I have said before, that no one is fit to follow the course of literature unless he has previously laid a firm foundation of piety and religious observance. Nor can there be any professed, such at least as the spirit of our Institute supposes, unless he be thoroughly grounded in piety as well as in learning. And this with God's assistance will surely be, if we hold fast to those precepts which are laid down in the first part of the Constitutions about admitting new members ; if, again, we observe in the noviceship those precepts which are found in the third part ; and finally, if we fulfil in the colleges what is prescribed in the fourth part. And since I address the whole Society, I earnestly exhort and implore each one not to be content with a mere perusal of those Constitutions, and a sterile admiration of the divine spirit and order which shine forth from them, but rather faithfully to apply to their observance, since on this alone depend the spiritual profit and advancement to which all of us must aspire. Willingly would I write of these matters at greater length, both

<sup>(3)</sup> Matth. v., 14.

because I am led to it by reason of my office, and because I am prevented from visiting the Provinces as I had first intended. But this pleasure also is denied me ; for I am so weak from the illness which I contracted shortly after the arrival of the Fathers Procurators that it is only with the greatest difficulty and the most painful effort that I can dictate even these lines. Consequently that I may not protract my letter to too great a length and that I may lessen the fatigue of it, I deem it advisable to reduce to a few heads the counsel which I wish to give you, for fear lest the sower of discord may gain entrance into our field and destroy the good seed which the Holy Spirit has sown therein by the grace of our holy vocation. I beg of you to pray especially that we may not tarry on the way of perfection after we have so well begun, but to run with ardor and with an ever increasing speed until we arrive at our journey's end even "unto the mount of God, Horeb."<sup>(4)</sup>

The first advice I have to give you I find clearly set forth in the tenth part of the Constitutions where there is question of the means to be employed in preserving and increasing the Society. These are the words : "The means which unite an instrument to God and render it ever ready to the touch of the divine hand are more efficacious than those which dispose it to be of service to man. These means are uprightness, generosity, and, particularly, charity and purity of intention in God's service. To these may be added a familiar intercourse with God in one's spiritual exercises and the purest zeal for the salvation of souls, which seeks nothing else than the glory of Him who created and redeemed them." Words well worthy of our most serious attention, since our Blessed Father wrote them with so much solitude and love for the welfare of his children. And if we seriously reflect on them we shall recognize that from the neglect thereof arise those miserable dissensions which are the destruction of all religious organizations. For just as a drought causes the flower and the fruit to wither, so does neglect of meditation and other exercises of piety destroy in the religious soul the flower and fruit of holiness. And a religious who

(4) III Kings xix., 8.



omits his meditation and renounces the imitation of his crucified Saviour, will have no spirit in his work for the glory of that divine Master. He will apply himself reluctantly to it. He will begin to grow satisfied with himself and to despise the labor of others, and for no other reason than this, that he rarely seeks in prayer a true knowledge of himself and a sincere conviction of the utter nothingness of man. The sovereign remedy for this, the remedy which at the same time consoles us in all our difficulties, is to be found only in the cross of our Saviour. If the rod of Moses was sufficient to cause the destruction of the Egyptians, how much more efficacious will be the cross of Christ in destroying those worldly and uncurbed passions which strive for the mastery in our souls? That these passions are still so vehement in us is a certain proof that we have not sought refuge in the cross. For what can be lacking him who has his asylum there? What can he need for the peace and happiness of his soul? Do we rejoice in prosperity? We owe it to the Cross. Do we feel the weight of sorrow and anguish? The Cross will sweeten our sorrows. Who would dare measure his strength with those whose strength is drawn from the cross of Christ? "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?" <sup>(5)</sup> If anyone, therefore, succumb to the attacks of the enemy, be they ever so violent, the plain reason is that he has been unwilling to use those means which bind us to God by the most perfect bonds. "Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in me." <sup>(6)</sup> If the counsels given in the tenth part of the Constitutions be faithfully observed, they by themselves will be sufficient to secure for us a life tranquil, indeed, and exempt from all annoyance. Then shall we be united in common thoughts and sentiments. Then shall we hear no more complaints about our food and clothing, or the burdens imposed upon us; for "charity is patient, is kind: charity dealeth not perversely, seeketh not her own." <sup>(7)</sup>

Though much could be said on the virtue of obedience, that fondest aim, the standard and tower of the Society's strength, yet

<sup>(5)</sup> Rom. viii., 35.

<sup>(6)</sup> Osee xiii., 9.

<sup>(7)</sup> I Cor. xiii., 4.



I refrain from so doing and refer you to that wonderful and helpful and all-embracing letter on this virtue by our blessed Father, St. Ignatius. I commend to you the reading of this letter with the counsel given by our Lord to the seeker after eternal life "This do and thou shalt live;"<sup>(8)</sup> for, by the observance, with God's grace, of the teachings of this letter we can claim the name, nay, the reality of sons of perfect obedience.

When speaking of Poverty, in the sixth part of the Constitutions, St. Ignatius represents it as a firm wall of religion which preserves religious families in their primitive spirit and discipline, and guards them against their many enemies. We must, therefore, look upon it as our greatest mainstay and be very careful that, while we endeavor to support our colleges, or help our houses, we do not allow ourselves to be led away by an immoderate solicitude, or a too anxious zeal, which can very easily be the occasion of scandal to men of the world and the cause, also, of pain and sorrow to ourselves. Since, moreover, the Gospel prohibits all immoderate desire of getting and possessing, let us not allow ourselves the least relaxation where poverty is concerned, under any pretext whatever of zeal or greater good. O let us not suffer a love for temporal things to steal into our hearts! for that love once admitted will work the ruin of every religious congregation. I must not be understood, however, as wishing to forbid the employment of just and moderate means for the maintenance of our needy colleges and houses; but I do assert, and experience has shown it in many instances, that the means we have employed to procure revenues for many of our colleges have rendered us burdensome to our neighbor, whereas our plain duty is to help him. But as often as we have been, on the contrary, moderate and hopeful in our endeavors to preserve the modest resources of our houses, through the goodness of Providence which watches over us, we have in unforeseen and unexpected ways obtained in one year that which we had vainly sought during many. Let it be thoroughly understood, and for this reason do I insist upon it, that our work cannot pros-

<sup>(8)</sup> Luke x., 28.

per through this undue solicitude ; nay more, our work will be hindered rather than helped by it. If we proceed, however, with moderation in silence and hope, everything will go well with us. Our neighbor will be edified, and we ourselves shall be happier in having realized our title of poor men, and Christ will shower upon us greater favors and more efficacious helps, because as the Psalmist says, in speaking to the Lord : " To thee is the poor man left : thou wilt be a helper to the orphan. " <sup>(9)</sup>

I would also arouse and exhort you, my dearly beloved Fathers and Brothers in Christ, to bear in mind that by the vows we vowed unto God we are no longer alive but dead, and that this life we live is now no longer our own, but His who spared not His own but laid it down for us. We must live our life, then, in Him ; for if we think that we can of ourselves preserve it in ourselves, we are greatly deceived. And these are the signs by which we may know that we are dead in Christ : to see nothing, to feel nothing, to answer nothing. If on the contrary we have our eyes always open to judge the doings of others, to retort upon Superiors and contradict the orders which they give, to be sad and to complain of being admonished of our faults, these are very evident signs that we are not dead in Christ, but that we are ruled by our passions, and that we have lost sight of the end we had in view in entering into religion.

I call your attention to this point because I read that the fervor and simplicity which obtained among those of the early Society were such that admonitions and corrections, far from causing grief and bitterness, begot only gratitude and an affectionate remembrance of the benefactor. And why should it be otherwise ? If men of the world and courtiers feel indebted to him who discovers to them some stain upon their countenance, or some disorder in their apparel, what, think you, should be his gratitude to whom a friendly admonition makes known some spiritual blemish, and thereby enables him to appear before the King of kings with that spotless sanctity which is necessary ? If sadness, vexation, or aver-

<sup>(9)</sup> Psalm x., 14.

sion crowds out the better feeling which we should have for our admonitor, we put ourselves in the danger of encountering one or the other of two fatal evils. Either our vices will wax stronger, because no one will care to admonish, or correct us (and indeed who is so foolhardy as to persist in administering medicine to a sick man who is violent and unwilling to be cured), or in the second case, supposing the remedy to be applied, we will receive the counsel or reprimand with such vexation and resentment that the whole community will be in pain and distress. Were we deeply penetrated with that spirit of simplicity and humility of which it is said in Proverbs, "his communication is with the simple,"<sup>(10)</sup> far different would our conduct be. And, indeed, how can God dwell with him in whom there is not this holy simplicity?

In the New Law Christ has forbidden the circumcision of the body, but has strongly recommended to him, who wishes to be His disciple, the spiritual circumcision, which is that of the heart. He calls upon His disciple to renounce himself, to take up his cross and to follow Him. And it is in this spirit that for grave reasons our holy institute forbids the use of public mortifications, but attaches so much importance to abnegation of the will and interior mortification, that for one to dispense himself therein would seem almost equivalent to his forfeiting the title of child of the Society. To act after such a fashion is nothing less than to blind oneself to the necessity of chastising and bringing under subjection a rebellious will which fears not to offend its Creator. To act after such a fashion is to follow one's caprice and flatter it in place of combating it and denying it in every possible way. Negligence in this matter may very easily be the cause of serious hurt to the Society. As the vine which is never pruned becomes sterile, and, instead of yielding grapes exhausts itself in a wild growth of branches and useless tendrils, and finally dies, so in the Society, if we seek our ease and neglect the mortification of our passions, in place of doing good we shall waste our energy in various labors which will not have a reward. Another evil begotten of this un-

(10) Prov. iii., 32.



circumcision of the heart and this self-esteem, is that dense cloud, as it were, of imperfections which rises about us and gradually obscures the presence of God so that eventually it hides it altogether. When I recall the gifts and the virtues of our Holy Founder and of the other Fathers also, who were the first fruits of the Society ; when I consider that in all their enterprises they worked and planned, as if they were under the very eye of God himself, I begin to dread that those excellent gifts and that perfection of virtue with which the good Lord so bountifully blessed them, may through our own fault be altogether denied ourselves. What then shall be our fate while we traverse the desert of this life, a desert fraught with so many perils, what shall be our fate, I say, if we be deprived of that divine light of God's special providence, seeing that the people of Israel, although guided in their desert-wanderings by a pillar of heavenly fire, had nevertheless to undergo so many trials and such great fatigue? How easily may we be led into error since there is no other light but the light of God alone to lead and guide us in our journeyings. Let us not, then, esteem that as the least important among the counsels which bids us with all our strength to mortify the heart. Let us perform all our actions as if we were in the presence of God our Saviour, repeating the while those words of David : " My heart hath been glad . . . and my flesh also shall rest in hope." Nor should anyone be surprised if he is deprived of peace and tranquillity, when he has taken no pains to keep himself in the presence of God. For such gifts are not conferred on those who make light of them, but only on those who earnestly labor to deserve them.

It is true, as I said before, that our vineyard " stretches forth its branches unto the sea." <sup>(11)</sup> It is true, also, that it has already put forth leaves and blossoms and flowers, and the fruit thereof is ripening. But this is not enough. It is further expected of it to produce wine in abundance. For no other end, indeed, has the vine been planted. Now in order to get wine from the grapes it is necessary that they be heaped into the wine-press and crushed.

(11) Ps. xv., 9.



Perhaps it is here that our trouble begins. Perhaps we do not relish this severe process. We do not care about being trampled under foot, bruised and crushed even though it be in order that we may yield the desired wine of joy and consolation. But if we keep in mind those words of our Lord: "I have trodden the wine-press alone" <sup>(12)</sup> and those other words: "I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father;" <sup>(13)</sup> if we keep these words in mind, I say, we shall see how necessary it is to be trodden under foot and crushed in the wine-press of affliction that Christ may reap from our lives the wine of those virtues which He seeks in His true disciple. Moreover, if we ourselves do not trample under foot the empty pride of honor and self-love that springs up in our heart, we shall be quickly trodden under foot by our enemies and we shall cease to be Christ's disciples.

And now that I may draw this letter to a close, and reduce to one point that which I especially desire of you, I conjure you to have continually before your eyes those words of the apostle: "See your vocation, brethren." <sup>(14)</sup> Should anyone, therefore, feel the desire of humbling himself, let him frequently ask himself how much he owes to his vocation and what the nature of that vocation requires. Let him watch his words and actions and consider whether they are such as become a member of the Society. Let this be the measure of his actions and he will be modest in the tone of his voice, reserved in his conversation, ever on the alert to give edification, prudent and upright in his deportment, zealous in withdrawing souls from sin, ardent in laboring and suffering for Christ and His Church, in a word, he will be a man according to our Constitutions: a man who knows how to devote himself to his neighbor's salvation while laboring at his own sanctification, a workman in the vineyard of the Lord, of whom it may be said in justice: "The laborer is worthy of his hire." <sup>(15)</sup> May the Lord deign to send to His vineyard many such workmen that we may

<sup>(12)</sup> Isaias 63, 3. <sup>(13)</sup> Matth. 26, 29. <sup>(14)</sup> I. Cor. i., 26. <sup>(15)</sup> Luke x., 7.

be ready to meet the wants, I will not say of Europe alone, but of Africa and Asia and India so that the whole world may be drawn to Christ Jesus, and that there may be but "one fold and one shepherd." (16) May Jesus Christ the good and true shepherd Who has numbered us amongst His sheep, make us docile to His voice and reveal Himself to us by His grace in this world and by His glory in the world to come.

As the state of my health warns me that the time of my dissolution is near, I pray and conjure you all by the charity you feel for me, to recommend me to God in your prayers and holy Sacrifices, in order that, during the little time that still remains to me, He will give me the grace of appreciating the favor of my vocation, of performing all my actions in His holy spirit, and of preparing myself for the great journey by walking unto the end in the paths of sanctity and in the presence of God. And this I also ask of Him and shall continue to ask for all the members of our Society, because I feel myself obliged to it by reason of my office and of my deep affection for the Society.

Your Reverence's Servant in Christ,

FRANCIS BORGIA.

*Rome,*

*April, 1569.*

(16) John x., 19.

## IV.

A LETTER OF VERY REV. FATHER CLAUDE ACQUAVIVA TO THE  
PROVINCIALS OF THE SOCIETY, ON SOME OF THE MEANS OF  
SECURING ITS PRESERVATION.

It is not my present purpose, Reverend Fathers, to write to you upon the importance of the preservation of the Society and of its growth in all manner of perfection; nor shall I dwell on our bounden duty of striving to attain these ends, even, if needs be, at the cost of our lives. One point, however, I desire to recall to your mind, the very point indeed upon which these blessings in a great measure depend. It is, that superiors should be solicitous and prompt carefully to remove all kinds of obstacles, before they gain strength, and thereby prevent grave consequences in the future. We must all be convinced that no human institution, however holy, however guarded and protected, may not in time gradually fall into decay. To this truth the sad fate of many a glorious and sacred undertaking bears witness. I therefore earnestly desire that we use our best endeavors to preserve and forward our Society. St. Gregory Nazianzen offers an advice in point: "When," he says, "only one member of the body is ill, the remaining portion suffers no harm therefrom, but preserves its soundness and, at times, even works the cure of that member. When, however, several members are affected and diseased the entire system is brought into imminent peril. The same occurs in moral bodies, where the unhealthy condition of the few is counteracted by the wholesome condition of the many. But should the number of those suffering and afflicted be great, the entire system becomes exposed to ruin." This passage I have cited in order to show that as long as only a small number of the Society fail to fulfil the duties of our high calling, and like so many ailing members threaten the health and vigor of the whole body, it may chance, through God's mercy, that the main portion not only will receive no injury but even re-

store the affected part. But should their number greatly increase, which may God avert, it is evident, what grievous damages may thence befall the whole Society. Hence the defects of individual members against the rules or spirit of the Institute are not to be despised or overlooked ; a timely remedy, rather, must be applied which may restore them to the healthful condition of the rest of the community. For, as St. Augustine remarks, "every unsound member destroys the healthful harmony of the whole body." In case of neglect, moreover, it will certainly come to pass, that, as a body politic is made up of individuals, so the Society gradually undermined by these lax members will weaken and waste away even before it becomes aware of its peril.

Those religious bodies whose interests are not local, but which extend far and wide and embrace many countries and persons, are, it seems to me, exposed to precisely the same danger as a tract of land or field which lies close to the river's edge. Defences and embankments are necessary to provide against the washing of the stream. Besides, a continual diligence is required to fill up and repair the gaps worn, now in one place, now in another, by the wearing and rushing of the water. Otherwise a sudden rise will, when least expected, overflow and wash away the entire property. In the same way, says St. Gregory Nazianzen, does the devil enter through a small opening which widening gradually allows him finally to rush in with all the impetuosity of a torrent. For the sake then of that love, which you bear to the Society, and on account of the zeal with which you seek its prosperity, it seemed good to me, Reverend Fathers, to recommend to your serious and earnest attention a few points touching the employment and perfect observation of the means of securing its preservation. The multiplying of regulations, rules, and prescriptions often fail to remedy evils, and are, besides, useless in the Society. For its Constitutions are drawn up with such divine inspiration and heavenly wisdom, and its Rules are at once so plain full, and minute, that there manifestly exists no evil which has not



befallen us save by their neglect, and which may not be most efficaciously remedied by their faithful observance.

To begin then with the very essence of our Constitutions, we must be deeply convinced and realize that the Institute of our Society, its system of government, occupations, and offices, require sanctity, not merely of a superficial nature, but of an exalted kind ; consisting in true abnegation, renouncement of self and an ardent pursuit of solid virtues as we find described by our blessed Father St. Ignatius.<sup>(2)</sup> Unless then this foundation has been deeply laid in the souls of the members of the Society, grave difficulties must necessarily arise in many instances. Nor will it be sufficient to overcome these obstacles merely for the present. Such a remedy, indeed, failing to reach the very seat of the evil, would not produce a real and permanent cure. And so, if at times there arise temptations and bitterness of heart among the Society's members, who differ so widely in character, temperament, and talent ; if, in the distribution of offices and employments, as preaching, lecturing, hearing confessions, teaching in the lower schools and other like occupations, we grow petulant over the portion allotted to ourselves, or envious of that which has fallen to others ; if reproofs and penances, or the necessity of seeking self-abasement, according to the spirit of humility and poverty, make us resentful, or fill us with disgust, then the foundation should be looked to, it is weakening, for the faults mentioned above prove that it is defective. Should any of Ours, then, commit a fault or show himself untractable in regard to the points just mentioned, and the superior limit his aim to the temporary amendment without seeking the lasting reform of his subject, he will never achieve his purpose. For the inferior who submits merely for the present occasion will often prove refractory in the future ; nay, even at the very moment he is apparently yielding, should the command be insisted upon, he will break into open disobedience. This may well be compared to what occurs in the fashioning of wax and glass. These substances, indeed, to be worked at will must be soft and plastic. Should you, however, wait

(2) Const. part. 10, § 2.

till they have hardened, no degree of care or skill will be of avail to fashion your design or prevent you from destroying the materials. Hence, in the attaining of the perfect observance of the Constitutions and Rules it is of supreme importance that the members of the Society be in the disposition required by the same Rules and Constitutions.

From these considerations then, it naturally follows that the superior's chief aim and most zealous endeavor should be to aid his subjects in the pursuit of true and solid virtues. To do this the more effectually, he should rid himself of all distractions and hindrances, and devote himself wholly to the duty of governing. Hence superiors are not to spend their time in visiting friends, assisting the neighbor, or even in frequent preaching; much less are they to allow themselves to be entangled in temporal affairs. And yet some Rectors become so oppressed and overburdened with such cares as to have scarcely time enough to breathe. Nor am I ignorant of the great needs of some of our colleges and the wants of many communities. Though unable to relieve these difficulties which come from various causes, I cannot but deplore the serious evil to which they give rise. It is my earnest desire, then, that experienced procurators be assigned to these colleges. By their aid, freed in part from the solicitude of temporal affairs, Rectors will be enabled to devote their best attention to points of far higher moment. Indeed, if in the discharge of spiritual duties we are wont to place our confidence in God's wise providence, why should we be less trustful in temporal matters. This is in keeping, moreover, with the advice of St. Augustine whom I shall presently quote: He is writing to his suffragan, Vallerius, for the purpose of pointing out that were the living trees, that is, the souls of the faithful, cared for more zealously than the church lands, God's poor would be far better provided for. Then he represents Christ our Lord thus upbraiding him. "Thou worthless servant! if one were to seize unjustly the Church's tilth whose fruits are garnered with so much care, thou wouldst take action at once before some earthly judge. Friends would advise and urge thee to lay the case

before him. Were the issue against thee, thou wouldst cross the sea, and appeal from this decision to a higher court. Nay, for a year, or more, thou wouldst stay afar in spite of clamors for thy return, and thou wouldst deem the time well spent in rescuing from the trespasser a paltry acre of land to be tilled not for the spiritual, but for the bodily needs of the poor. All this wouldst thou do, and more. But thou wouldst be listless in reclaiming that field, which My blood has watered. Oh, how deeply pleasurable to me would thine efforts be, if they were spent in protecting the land whereon are growing my living trees,—the souls of men!" Hence we perceive how much it behoves Rectors and others of the Society to shun too great solicitude in providing against mere bodily needs. For stronger reason, then, superiors are not to allow themselves to be engrossed in secular affairs and other occupations which are at variance not only with their calling in general, but in particular with the successful discharge of their office.

As the condition of the head reacts upon the entire system, so too, according to Part 10, § 8 of the Constitutions will inferiors be influenced by their superiors. Hence it naturally follows that the successful government of the Society, in great measure, depends upon a judicious choice of those to be placed in authority. The final appointment, it is true, rests with me; nor do I desire aught more ardently than to assign to all our college superiors adorned with the qualifications described in Part 4, c. 10, and Part 9, c. 6. To attain this end, indeed, I shall employ the most careful diligence in our Lord. On two points, however, I stand in need of the assistance of the Provincials. The first is that, according to my late instruction, they forward me after prayer, thorough investigation, and consultation, accurate information concerning the members eligible to offices. Furthermore, I desire that the procurators, who are shortly to meet at Rome, bring with them full and detailed informations drawn up after the prescribed directions. The second point referred to above is, that the Provincial diligently instruct the superiors under them and guide them, as



it were by the hand, teaching them how to master the art of governing, that having attained its perfection they may the more successfully lead their subjects in the holy service we have undertaken for the glory of God. The same end will be greatly furthered, if Provincials, in their visitation, take special pains to see how superiors acquit themselves of their various duties, particularly the promotion of spiritual matters, in which, moreover, they must be both interested and practised. It will prove useful also to examine the complaints and accusations inferiors may lodge against those over them and to take measures accordingly. Such reports must not be treated as mere temptations, but heard patiently and remedied as may seem best in our Lord.

A more judicious choice also, should be made in the appointment of the prefect of spiritual things, especially in our houses of study. These spiritual fathers, moreover, should be experienced directors of souls and are not to be permitted to engage in any other occupations likely to interfere with their duties. Time also must be allotted them wherein to treat with Ours, and their authority must be upheld ; for it is mainly upon their office that the structure of our spiritual perfection depends.

Great discrimination, also, must be had in the admission of novices, who are not to be received unless they be fit and worthy, and manifest, moreover, unmistakable signs of such vocations as will ensure the prosperity of the Society. The rules, too, of the novice-master concerning their trials must be exactly observed and no one is to be allowed to omit the second or third year of probation, save in case of grave and urgent necessity, to be determined by the instruction I have lately given the Provincials on this subject. Diligent care must also be taken to dismiss betimes such novices as are not deemed fit for the work of the Society.

In our houses of study earnest efforts must be made to preserve the spirit of fervor and devotion. Time must be given our Scholastics to devote themselves to their studies ; for which purpose they are also to be exempt from all occupations likely to hamper their progress. Such, however, as betray signs of pride,



want of self-denial, and are given to murmuring, must, by no means, be allowed to continue their course. Especially is this measure needful, when a dread is entertained lest the ornament of science and learning may in their hands be turned into a weapon dangerous to the Society. And this calamity will surely befall her, whether these worldly-minded members remain with us or failing to reform, be dismissed from our ranks. The true and genuine spirit, then, of the Institute must be revived within them at once. This happy change will be more effectually attained by removing them from their studies and sending them back to the novitiate to be exercised anew in its various experiments, humiliations, and other trials. Should this expedient fail to produce a real improvement or genuine reform, then the only remedy left is dismissal from the Society. For we cannot conceive the harm and injury which such members, if suffered to remain, will inflict upon the Society. To the serious inconveniences of every day occurrence must be added the complaints and murmurs they will give vent to, when in the course of time their ordination to the priesthood must be deferred, and in the event of their being raised to this dignity, far greater difficulties will rise and endanger the prosperity of the Society. For, later on, they will be found aiming at honors and offices, breaking forth into open murmurs, poisoning the little ones of Christ against the Institute, and thus proving a cause of scandal and source of danger. But especially is this the case with those, who having been appointed to preaching and to the work of the ministry have succeeded in winning the favor of persons of rank both in the laity and clergy. They must, then, be endured as long as possible, and when at last they have to be expelled, it is only with more embittered mind on their own part, and greater ill-will and disedification on the part of the neighbor.

But before recourse be had to this extreme measure charity enjoins that no expedient to reclaim the straying ones be left unattempted. It is no easy task, however, to determine the precise limits to this endurance. In fact, several Provincials have lately consulted me on this very subject, and asked me to point out a definite rule of conduct.

The reply I then gave, will not be out of place in the present instance. It was extremely difficult, I answered, to offer a universal remedy for each and every case of this nature, or to trace out a course of action to be strictly followed on all occasions alike. But Provincials must first draw down upon themselves the grace of the Holy Spirit, by frequent recourse to God in prayer and at Mass. Then through the local superiors and their consultants they should endeavor to possess themselves thoroughly of the particular circumstances of the parties concerned, their present dispositions also, as well as the remedies already employed, or still available. These points may be readily ascertained by those actually present. Experience itself, however, and the gravity of the dangers require that both the trials referred to above as well as expulsion from the Society be not indefinitely postponed so that superiors be kept in a state of continual suspense. We should, therefore, apply in time the remedies the Society has ordained in such cases. By means of these tests, moreover, the Society on her part will become acquainted with the qualities and virtues of the subjects, whom she had not yet thoroughly understood, whilst the members also will gain a deeper insight into self. Should no fruit, however, be reaped from all this labor, the Society will be compelled finally to unburden its soil of the barren tree. Still in pronouncing upon the unfitness of a subject for the purposes of our Institute, all over-haste or precipitation must be carefully avoided. Imitating in this the example of Christ in the person of the tiller of the field wherein the barren fig-tree stood. "Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it, and dung it."<sup>(1)</sup> This, however, does not imply that superiors must allow themselves to worry over the advantages such members might at some future time bring to the Society; nor again are they to be over fearful or even scrupulous lest, perchance, the subject to be dismissed might improve in the long run. For unless a well grounded hope be had of his near reform, the superior's anxiety and doubt may never come to an end, seeing that there is no period in a man's life at which a change for the better may not occur.

<sup>(1)</sup> Luke xiii. 8.

Preachers must take care to observe my former directions most exactly whereby they will foster the true spirit in themselves and produce more abundant fruit in the hearts of the faithful. Putting aside, then, less useful conceits or ideas of their own, they must apply themselves to the study of the Sacred Scriptures and the holy Fathers. Thus will they reflect more honor upon the Society and forward the greater good of souls. Any preference for the more distinguished churches and pulpits and neglect of humbler places should be checked at once, that all may advance with the modesty and humility which has ever been the practice and ornament of the preachers of the Society.

Confessors also must be exhorted to discharge with zeal and true fervor the important and sacred duties of their office. It will greatly conduce to the glory of God and the help of our neighbor, if they be sent to various places there to labor during a few months for the good of souls. Such missionaries, however, should be furnished with the means necessary to overcome the difficulties usually attending work of this nature. Greater success, too, will bless their efforts, should they set forth singly, or in bands of two or three according to the number of those engaged in the ministry at the houses where they reside. They are also to be replaced by others in their absence. The pious women and other penitents who may oppose their leaving can be readily won by the confessors themselves. Like true sons of the Society and of holy obedience, let them, on these occasions, plainly set before their penitents the reasons of this course. They may state, for instance, that it is necessary in our Lord, to devote some time to mission works whereby many souls may be assisted, and the interests of our Saviour and Lord promoted. They may add also that they will return again after a short absence, during which others will take their place. Finally, let them point out to their penitents the folly of so clinging to particular confessors, or of directors becoming so fixed to one office or church as to interfere with measures likely to promote higher interests. With these or similar suggestions sincerely proposed, confessors cannot fail to overcome the opposition of their



penitents. Should a contrary conduct, however, betray signs of undue attachment to some particular place or office, the need of a removal will thence prove more manifest and urgent. It is, indeed, a great pity and a subject of concern to me, that men eminently qualified to achieve great things for the salvation of souls, are content to confine themselves to one cosy little parish and limit their exertions to hearing the confessions of a few women, who devoutly seek their advice two or three times a week, whilst throughout the land in cities and towns and villages numbers of well disposed souls are thus deprived of much needed assistance.

It will likewise greatly promote the welfare of the Society as a body, and the peace of its individual members, if the importance of resignation and indifference in all offices be thoroughly explained to the novices, and deeply impressed upon them. Especially is this necessary with regard to the various grades, as mentioned in the Constitutions. Thus, like soft wax, the novices will readily receive and retain such impressions as will later preclude the vain plea of previous misunderstanding or error. Provincials also, according to my late instruction, should send timely informations concerning those about to be promoted to any grade. They are to be especially careful to avoid neglect in receiving, in due time, those who are to be admitted to the grade of spiritual coadjutors ; under usual circumstances and when they have proved worthy they should not be made to wait over seven years.<sup>(2)</sup>

Ordinary and common failings, or remissness on one or two occasions may be overlooked, but should any of Ours betray signs of serious and habitual faults as, for instance, love of dignities, stubbornness of opinion, or other serious faults of this nature, suitable correctives must be used. For this purpose, if engaged in the ministry or in studies, he should be removed from these occupations and given time to consider his condition. During this self-examination he is to be advised with fatherly kindness of the gravity of his state, and asked, moreover, to devise and propose whatever plan he might himself deem most conducive to

<sup>(2)</sup> This time, however, has been prolonged to ten years by Cong. XII. Dec. 14.



his reform. It will be well, then, to excite in him an earnest desire of correction. In exciting this wish, however, kindness, and not sternness, is to be used, so that both the superior and inferior become aware that they are looking to the same end and supporting the same burden.

The Provincials, in compliance with their 14th Rule, should see that our instructions be communicated to all the superiors in their provinces, and to the Consultors as well. Besides the advantage of better guidance in putting them to practice, this information will enable them to acquaint us with their happy results in the various colleges.

A thorough knowledge of the Institute will likewise prove of the highest utility, not only to superiors who must govern, but also to their assistants, the consultors. Hence the Provincials are to take special care that they frequently read and rightly understand the Rules and Constitutions. Thus it will be expedient that during their visitation conferences be held at which they must be present and promote the correct interpretation and faithful observance of the Institute. Let them persuade themselves that as the choicest blessings will accrue to the Society from the study and practice of her Constitutions, so also the most grievous damages will befall her by their ignorance and neglect. Indeed we must look upon the Society as a magnificent structure, designed with consummate skill, its various parts blending and harmonizing with such perfection that if a single one be omitted, the remaining portions, robbed of their bond of union and symmetry must needs defeat the noble plan of the architect. If a definite height of roof, for instance, is intended, the walls must be built with corresponding strength and thickness, else they will prove weak and thwart the execution of the original design. And this is true also of all the other parts. But it is especially in the edifice of the Society that this is the case. Here often the non-observance of one Rule will entail the violation of a number of others; the neglect, for instance, of the regulation concerning admissions, dismissals, the imparting of the true spirit and letter,

in the first, second, third and fourth parts respectively, will interfere with the observance of the injunction in the fifth part touching the ranging of members according to the various grades. Again, supposing the members then received have failed to reach the perfection which this same part requires, how will they attain the high degree of obedience demanded of them in the sixth part. The directions, too, for the founding of missions given in the seventh part will no longer be practicable, whilst the sweet bond of union and charity, recommended in the eighth part must needs be broken ; and last of all, the wise precautions laid down in the tenth part, to provide for the preservation and prosperity of the Society will come to naught. The evil, then, occasioned by the neglect of a single part must be weighed and considered not in itself alone, but in relation with the whole edifice. Then shall we perceive how the absence of a single stone has weakened the strength of the entire structure, destroyed its harmony and marred its beauty. We eagerly desire, therefore, and warmly recommend that the study and practice of the Rules and Constitutions be taken as much to heart by the various Provincials for the good of their own provinces, as they are cherished by the General for the welfare of the entire Society.

Among the Rules I wish to be carefully attended to I will specify the following : the 41st and 100th of the Provincial ; the 3rd, 16th, 26th, 48th, and 72nd of the Præpositus ; the 2nd, 15th, 25th, 69th, and 70th of the Rector ; 16th, 17th and 18th of the Priests ; finally, the 56th of the Novice-Master.

There is another point whose observance I earnestly recommend and the neglect of which is fraught with peril to all religious bodies. I allude to the example of the older members, who should prove to the younger religious models of humility, love of poverty, obedience and self-denial. For in the absence of these virtuous qualities, and owing to the evil inclinations of our nature, the younger members will soon come to mark and imitate the faults and failings of their elders. On the other hand, however, the young and new religious must not be suffered to be wanting in

deference and respect due to the older fathers, who amidst the various offices of the Society, have, in the service of Christ borne the labor and heat of the day. This will be more readily secured, should the Rectors themselves set the example and provide for these deserving fathers according to their virtue and wants. And should they even exceed the precise requirements of their office and charity, they will reap a further advantage; for in proportion to this greater attention, they will be able the more effectually to admonish these older members and induce them to prove themselves the bright pattern we have just described.

Provincials must also see that superiors govern their inferiors with fatherly love and without any marks of predilection. Inferiors, however, should on their part, earnestly endeavor to overlook the minor imperfections and natural shortcomings of their superiors. Yet, it is beyond endurance that there are some who are so unbearably and ridiculously overwrought that the slightest fault in their superior, wounds their highly sensitive and susceptible natures. Those in authority, therefore, are to understand that their main duty consists in acting the part of a kind father. Nor must this love and care be exerted merely in meeting the wants of their inferiors, or other things of this nature, but they must further manifest themselves in the reproofs given, and the trials and penances imposed. But this topic I have already treated at sufficient length in my first letter addressed to the Provincials, which I would have you read over from time to time. In this connection, however, there is one remark I will not omit. Superiors on no provocation whatever should so forget themselves as to become exasperated or fly into a passion. Such conduct, instead of correcting the subject will only give rise to strong aversions that will eventually bar every access by which the superior might bring aid. St. Gregory Nazianzen has some remarks in point. Writing to a certain Vitalianus, he observes that parents who would retain the love and secure the lasting obedience of their children should overlook a number of their failings. Hence they frequently shut their eyes and feign not to have perceived



many faults they have clearly seen. For they know full well that were they to scold continually and call their sons to account, they would soon break through the wholesome restraint of filial fear and rush headlong into every vice. Sternness, indeed, begets unbending pride; kindness on the contrary wins to fewer falls those whose offences are forgiven. For all men in general, but especially the offspring of a noble and glorious line, whose bright example they enjoy, must not be held back by too strong a grasp, but gently checked rather, and directed by the reins of kindness. Superiors, however, must not misunderstand my meaning, and pass over all the faults of their subjects. Such a course, suffering the inferiors to go from bad to worse, would prove most disastrous to the Society and to the offenders as well. On the other hand superiors are not to be always reproofing. For thus continually to correct and goad on inferiors, to bear in mind their offences, to betray alike distrust in great and small faults, to harbor suspicion, to recall past failings, and, finally, to intimate that hopes of a reform are no longer entertained, is nothing short of snapping the bit of fear, casting aside the reins of prudence by which the erring ones might be guided, and spurring them on in the road of error.

In preceding letters, I have spoken at length on the bond of fraternal charity, as a means of both preserving the vigor of the Society and forwarding the good of souls. I shall only add that every effort must be made to remove completely whatever may tend to weaken it. And first, it is quite evident that our self-love and inborn thirst for distinction are wont to beget ambition and envy. The disagreeing of judgments, also, gives rise to disunion of wills. The habit, too, of murmuring, as well as too great a freedom in censuring the doings of our brethren, must be considered as the bane of concord. Hence, if aught happen to endanger the life of this peace and union, let the superior be prompt in applying a radical cure. Nor should superiors fancy that external application of remedies is sufficient; for they may bring temporary relief, but effect no lasting cure. Therefore, we must dread lest,



after secretly fomenting dislikes, wounded feelings should suddenly break forth into open hatred. In this, then, no less than in many other evils small beginnings are not to be overlooked and neglected. In a letter to Profuturus, St. Augustine presents excellent reasons in point, and tells us that kindly feelings need to be more carefully fostered than even hospitality to strangers. In the latter instance, indeed, it is better occasionally to shelter an unworthy visitor than through excessive prudence exclude a single deserving guest. It is quite different, however, in the first instance. He then goes on to describe the insensible growth of hatred: "It is especially when wearing a semblance of righteousness that our aversion is liable to turn to hatred: hate, in fact, is naught else than lasting aversion, which with mingled sweetness and bitterness we retain too long in the vase of our hearts, till at last all its contents are soured and corrupted." And after this illustration St. Augustine concludes in the following striking words: "It is exceedingly wiser to shut out from the garden of our souls even righteous indignation. Once sown, indeed, it is not easily uprooted, but from a mere sapling springs up into a full grown tree: for hatred gains sudden strength and boldness, and in the cover and darkness of night will blush at no deed of wickedness."

Our manner of life belongs to the mixed kind, and accordingly, the aim of our Institute embraces not merely our own, but also, as far as is possible, our neighbor's salvation. Hence we must strive with all diligence and zeal to lead back erring souls to the love of their Creator, and employ for this purpose the means and works described in our Rules and Constitutions. Should anyone, thus the better to promote his own perfection, avoid all dealings with his neighbor, and shun the distractions and annoyances of this kind of life, he would be the victim of an evident delusion suggested by a spirit foreign to our vocation. Another point deserving of special attention in this connection is the method peculiar to the Society. For, it must be remarked, our Institute does not merely prescribe the help of our neighbor, but

details its manner as well. All, indeed, comply with the former, but not a few neglect the latter ; a course of action which in time cannot but prove detrimental to the Society. For, as St. Bonaventure tells us, the main cause of ruin in religious bodies consists in too frequent external occupations, which serve to distract the heart and dry up the well of devotion. Hence, moderation is needful both in the manner and time devoted to these exercises of charity. In the manner, I say ; because in the very excitement of such labors we must ever be mindful not only of their direct end and God's presence, but likewise of our religious profession, of whatever is in keeping with this calling, and finally, of all the details prescribed by our Rules for the successful management of the particular work in question. Thus, for example, when called to hear the confessions of the sick, we must bear in mind that the companion must be in a place where he can see what is going on. Again, when employed in preaching, we must not forget to edify our hearers by our example as well, as is enjoined by the eighteenth rule of the priests, and the third rule of the preachers ; and thus should this principle guide us in all the particulars of our calling. If by this means, we have secured in all our undertakings, a right intention, and, moreover, availed ourselves of all the aids furnished by the Society, we shall have every reason to expect the grace of God, the help and spiritual strength with which our Lord is wont to animate his laborers. Blessed with these favors, we shall go forward with increased courage, sweeter consolation, and greater security along roads otherwise fraught with dangers. Even so, we must on our way ever bear in mind two most important precautions, contained in the following advice of Jeremias the Prophet :<sup>(3)</sup> " Keep thy foot from being bare and thy throat from thirst." For, on this journey, unless we be suitably provided with shoes, there is great danger, not only of soiling our feet with the mire of the world, or tearing them with its briars, but even, as St. Jerome remarks, in his comments on this passage, of being fatally stung by its ven-

<sup>(3)</sup> Jerem. ii, 25.

omous reptiles. On the other hand we need to be refreshed and strengthened with the dew of heaven lest in our increasing weakness we faint on the way. Now this spiritual nourishment consists in the yearning aspirations of the soul and the contemplation of God. Then shall we be ready to go forth and minister to the needs of our neighbor, and thus equipped it will be an easy task in the heat of our exertions to unite vigor of action with peace and tranquillity of mind. St. Augustine, writing to Nembridius, offers some remarks in point. After observing that freedom from the turmoil of worldly occupations gives rise to a deep peace superior to any earthly joy, the saint continues: "If the world then is powerless to produce such security, whence does it come? Is it not more frequently the boon of such souls as are wont to worship God in the inmost shrine of their hearts? Why, too, is this peace known to continue even in the excitement of exterior occupations, unless it had been first secured in that interior sanctuary." Thus does this holy father use his own experience to teach us how true peace and happiness may always be attained by those who habitually hold communion with God within the secret shrine of their hearts. He tells us, moreover, how in the very midst of our work, we may still enjoy calm and quiet, provided we practise union with God and go forth from His presence to spread His glory by the gain of souls. Hence we see how great is the need of prayer, and the exceeding great advantage to be derived from our prescribed daily meditation, if it be done diligently and profitably.

Some precautions are needful also with regard to the time devoted to works of zeal. For all may not be able to put in practice the pious device just described, nor many use it as perfectly as would be expedient, hence even holy and useful occupations should be occasionally interrupted. These intervals must be devoted to rest, that having thus regained our spiritual strength we may return with renewed zest to labor for our own and our neighbor's perfection. Far from being foreign or opposed to our Institute, this expedient is in harmony with the spirit of our Rules and Constitutions, and in accordance with the wishes and intention of



our blessed Father St. Ignatius. Carvers and engravers who work in marble and various kinds of stone, know how soon by repeated blows and constant concussion their instruments grow dull. Hence their practice of keeping at hand a file and at times even fire wherewith to restore to their chisels the lost edge and temper. Nor do they, nor could any sensible man, deem the time thus employed ill spent; for, otherwise they would soon cease to make any impression upon the hard stone with instruments grown blunt and wholly useless. The point under present consideration is further illustrated by St. Gregory, with almost inspired wisdom. He is commenting on the following passage of Job, xxxviii. 35. "Canst thou send lightning and will they go, and will they return and say to thee: Here we are?" "They are sent forth," writes the holy father, "and sped on their errand, who from the quiet of contemplation plunge, as it were, into the excitement of the active life. But upon their return they then address God: 'Here we are,' because after the distraction of external labors they hasten back to the calm of contemplation in order to kindle afresh their waning ardor, and take fire from the very flames of the heavenly torch. For in the distraction entailed by external duties, no matter how pious, their burning zeal would soon cool unless continually renewed at the furnace of contemplation." Then concluding the holy father says: "unless these zealous souls constantly revert to the contemplation of God, the growing coldness of their heart will soon quench the fire on their lips." But I have already treated this subject on a previous occasion. I have shown, too, the importance and need, even, in the Society, of setting aside certain intervals, wherein by silence, solitude and the use of the Spiritual Exercises, our fervor of spirit may be renewed. I shall add nothing more to what I have said already save to recommend most earnestly this common practice which has by the grace of God proved no less beneficial to the Society, than grateful to the divine Goodness and Majesty.

Finally, when following the directions contained in Part 10, § 7, 8 and 9, we must not neglect those given in § 11, where we are recommended to foster secular friendships, and regain those



we may have lost. For it is evident the Society does not lack enemies. As long, however, as we remain true to the duties of our calling, we have no ground of dread, but of joy rather, since while our humiliations and trials are thus increased, our merit also is heightened; for "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you."<sup>(4)</sup> Since, however, the service and glory of God may be greatly advanced by the help of secular favor, we must in compliance with our Constitutions strive with all diligence and religious prudence to regain the good will of the former friends of the Society. Still our chief end must be so to act as to avoid the least suspicion of cupidity or avarice, and refute by our lives any imputation of arrogance, pride, or the desire of insinuating ourselves into the homes of the great and into all manner of places and affairs. Doubtless many charges of this nature will be preferred against us. We must then be all the more on our guard to shun whatever may lend the least color to these accusations. Hence we must go forth with the breastplate of humility and the helmet of prudence furnished us by our vocation and the spirit of our Institute.

Such are, Reverend and dear Fathers, my thoughts and impressions, expressed as plainly as I could in writing. I have also mentioned the dangers that threaten us, as well as the means by which we may oppose them and secure the prosperity of the Society. For the past months, these plans have furnished me matter for reflection, and proved an object of earnest recommendation to God in my prayers and holy sacrifices, as well as a subject of frequent consultation with the Assistants. Their execution now lies with you, Reverend Fathers, and I rely upon your efforts, your patience, and perseverance. I am well aware, in fact, of your zeal, and know too, that no exertion will be omitted on your part. The undertaking is of no small moment. Its success indeed involves the very existence of the Society, an institution most precious in the sight of the divine Majesty.

And now let us hasten to the open arms of our mother, and be roused by the burning words she is addressing us. They are

<sup>(4)</sup> Matt. v. 11.

the same, which in former days the saintly mother of the Machabees used to exhort her noble son: "My son, have pity upon me, that bore thee nine months in my womb, and gave thee suck three years, and nourished thee, and brought thee up unto this age."<sup>(5)</sup> The boon she thus craved from her son, was none other than that he should bear himself courageously through the struggle. Hence she concludes, "Being made a worthy partner with thy brethren, receive death, that in that mercy I may receive thee again with thy brethren."<sup>(6)</sup>

With terms even more ardent and stirring are we being exhorted by our mother the Society, who with manifold hardships and sufferings, anxieties and sacrifices, has begotten, nurtured, and brought us up in Christ our Lord. And now she begs and implores us to fight on bravely and manfully, yet more, that by our example we lead and cheer on our brethren through the same struggle, that with them and our elder brethren, the first fathers of the Society, who have fought the same battle with so much fortitude, edification, and success, we may one day be received into Heaven to enjoy the reward of a glorious triumph.

I commend myself most earnestly to your prayers and holy sacrifices.

The servant of all in Christ,

CLAUDE ACQUAVIVA.

*Rome,*

*March 28, 1587.*

<sup>(5)</sup> II. Mac. vii. 27.

<sup>(6)</sup> Id. 29.

## V.

LETTER OF OUR VERY REVEREND FATHER CLAUDE ACQUAVIVA  
TO THE PROVINCIALS OF THE SOCIETY ON THE USE OF THE  
SPIRITUAL EXERCISES.

Though we have elsewhere and frequently written and recommended the use of the Spiritual Exercises, by means of which, as is evident to every one, our Lord God from the very first days of the Society made our work so fruitful for souls ; still, as we are at present sending to the provinces the Directory of the Exercises (revised by the committee appointed in the 5th General Congregation), we take this occasion to urge your Reverence to strive with all possible fervor to arouse and keep alive the practice of the Spiritual Exercises. Let not your zeal in this matter be confined to our own household, but let it extend to those outside the Society. For it is manifest from the very nature of the work that Almighty God is wont to bestow by this salutary means an unwonted increase of grace, not only on religious according to their state, but as circumstances demand, even on persons of the world. It is my ardent desire, then, that, first of all, our own brethren should by frequent practice acquire a masterful use of the Exercises, that thus they may afterwards with great profit to souls give them to persons living in the world. I wish that your Reverence would also make it a matter of serious consideration that our confessors instil the practice of the Exercises into the hearts of those of their penitents they deem fit, and with all kindness, induce and urge them to make them. For those who by experience have once understood their heavenly power will afterwards be the most eloquent advocates in awakening this salutary desire in their fellow men. Great is the edification, abundant the fruit and consolation which, with God's favor, have been gained from the Spiritual Exercises by seculars, as is evidenced here in Rome, where the work of retreats to seculars has been begun. Local superiors, therefore,



ought to show themselves ready and willing to entertain any who may wish to make the Spiritual Exercises. They should put aside all consideration of inconvenience and expense, which at times will be incurred, and be generously alert to do all in their power to advance the good of souls, which with the divine assistance may be looked for. For, it is to be expected, if superiors show themselves parsimonious in this respect, and little disposed to receive these persons, that few will present themselves to make retreats; and confessors, seeing the difficulty superiors make, will manifest little zeal in urging their penitents to go through the Exercises.

It will likewise help on this work not a little, if your Reverence makes it a point to see, that in all our colleges and residences as far as possible, there are certain rooms set apart for externs who may wish to make retreats; and that in those buildings which shall afterwards be erected, provision be made for apartments of this kind in a suitable portion of the building, so that they may not in any way interfere with the members of the community.

Fully persuaded that your Reverence has carefully considered the weight and importance of this matter and how greatly it contributes to the service of God and the advancement of souls that this practice be everywhere introduced and kept alive, I shall not urge the matter further. I would, however, make this suggestion, that in this matter your Reverence will find the time most opportune when you confer with superiors on ways and means of government, as also at the Provincial Congregation, where your Reverence can meet the superiors, the professed, and all others you may determine.

It is my desire that your Reverence would dilate upon this ardent desire with which the Lord has deemed worthy to inspire me, that I may see our brethren most zealous in this matter, employing themselves with all diligence in the help of souls, for which sake the Lord has called us to this kind of life and of which He will demand from us a rigorous account. For this reason, then, your Reverence will not only exhort all our brethren to this great work, but confer on the methods and various means by which

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the greatest number of souls may be aided ; urging on all the practice of the Spiritual Exercises, as also the careful and becoming ministration by themselves and those entrusted to their care of preaching and hearing confessions and the other functions, in which according to our Institute we are engaged, that in all things the Lord be glorified, and in our quest for souls His Majesty be praised.

I commend myself to the prayers of all.

CLAUDE ACQUAVIVA.

*Rome,*

*August 14, 1601.*

## VI.

A LETTER OF OUR VERY REVEREND FATHER CLAUDE ACQUAVIVA  
TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY ON RENEWAL  
OF SPIRIT AND CO-OPERATION WITH GOD'S GRACE.

Painful experience makes manifest to every honest religious the absolute necessity of daily renewal of spirit. If true to his calling and keenly alive to his best interests, he must acknowledge that personal sanctity is the outcome of unending and untiring work alone. This is the reason why God in the Book of Wisdom and in the writings of his Prophets and Apostles so often and so forcibly advises and urges us to forget the things that are behind and stretch forward to them that are before. St. Paul himself closes a fervid invitation to this line of conduct with the following remarkable conclusion, "Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded."<sup>(1)</sup> He thus emphatically intimates that it would be a great mistake to fancy that he addressed himself only to novices in the way of perfection, or that he exempted from the obligation of unflagging energy even religious, who, like ourselves, may be said to have begun the journey with a leap. St. Jerome too must have had this thought in his mind when he wrote to Abigaus concerning a certain spiritual daughter of his, "One must not rest by the wayside. He must with persevering effort push through the desert of this life to the land of the elect. He must not think that all is done when he has once left Egypt behind ; but must make his way through trials without number to Mount Nebo and the river Jordan. He must be a second time circumcised in Galgala. He must watch the walls of Jericho fall beneath the noise of the priests' trumpets. He must slay Adonizedec. He must assist at the destruction of the once beautiful cities Hai and Gazer."<sup>(2)</sup> In these few words the learned Doctor with many an allusion to sacred history, as was his wont, conveys many useful lessons. It is not enough to leave the world and embrace

<sup>(1)</sup> Philip. iii. 15.

<sup>(2)</sup> Epist. 77.



religion ; but to enter in triumph the land of promise, the kingdom of Heaven, we must fight our way through temptations that are heavy, and dangers that are thick. We must climb the lofty peaks of perfection and go down to the river Jordan, the symbol, because it means "descent," of voluntary humility and self-abasement, to be washed free on its banks from the stains of dust and sweat sure to accumulate in the anguish and worry of temptations and in the sore trials of this life. We must be a second time circumcised in Galgala, because it is little worth to cut loose only once from the vanities of this world, unless we often, yea forever and always, studiously prune away whatever rank growth doggedly crops up within us to check our progress along the path we have chosen. We must be courageous of spirit and men of prayer, that the walls of difficulty standing straight in our way may be levelled. We must do to death whatever of the flesh and of the senses yet breathes within us ; and the strongly fortified places of enemies bordering on the line of march, that is, I fancy, all that the world loves and cherishes, we must with an assiduity that never sleeps destroy to the foundation.

To detect the hidden sources, whence spring the hosts of trying obstacles that beset us, we need only attentively consider the mock parade and emptiness of this world, in which, as long as we sojourn in the flesh, we must of necessity live. We need only weigh well the thousand cunning devices of the arch-fiend, on whom, as St. Leo says, "our health inflicts a painful wound, on whom our gain inflicts irreparable loss," who for persistency of purpose and skill in the art of doing harm beats anything the world ever saw. We need only study the hosts of desires at strife within us, desires that of their very nature fill each hour with imminent danger of sin and undo weak souls attempting the higher flights of virtue. It is, therefore, our bounden duty to wage unremitting war with ourselves, to amass wealth with unflagging energy and a perseverance unacquainted with defeat. It is our bounden duty to deck ourselves with the spoils of victory snatched, as it were, in the strong language of St. Augustine from the very jaws of a world

on fire. On this account, then, though I have more than once on former occasions written you, and, in accordance with the obligations of my office, urged you to hasten with giant strides towards that summit of perfection, to which our Institute beckons us, I must nevertheless confess, that as often as I contemplate with careful eye the position occupied by our Society, the vast deal of good it already does for God's glory and the greater measure of good it can yet do, I feel myself consumed with a burning desire to see you essay even greater things. What makes this ardor of mine the more intense is the reflection that each one of you, if he takes the trouble to look closely into himself, will find in his daily round of duties much to be amended. St. James says that "in many things we all offend." He will also abundantly discover, unless indeed he belong to that class of men who never sleep and never tire in their pursuit of the better gifts ahead, that he has invariably lost full many an opportunity simply because he was not on the alert. Would that we could without interruption surrender our whole minds to thoughts of this nature. Then would our Society's outward features assume a cast far fairer and far more majestic. Then would the souls of a world re-echo with that sweetest of all harmonies, the unique blending of so many different tongues and characters and minds and graces into one grand chorus to ravish the ears of the Church militant and triumphant.

Wherefore, besides innumerable other means put by the Holy Spirit's suggestion at our disposal, I have thought it well to recommend particularly absolute devotion to the Spiritual Exercises and to interior converse with God. We have ourselves on more occasions than one watched these means at work throughout the whole Society with most abundant and fruitful results. With this very end in view our Holy Father Clement VIII., who with the instinct of a fond parent fosters the prosperous growth of our body, has once again, as so often before, crowned our prayers with the concession of another Jubilee. The auspicious occasion, therefore, in the words of St. Peter, inspires me to "stir up by way of

admonition your sincere mind." <sup>(3)</sup> The most ready and most efficacious means at hand to accomplish this my purpose is to attempt a vivid portrayal of the position we occupy, and the exalted dignity of that Society, in whose welfare our own individual interests are concerned. We read in Ezechiel that the Lord God, to arouse and to confound with shame the children of Israel, who had gone far astray, addressed the prophet in these terms: "But, thou, son of man, show to the house of Israel the Temple, and let them be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the building and be ashamed of all that they have done." <sup>(4)</sup> St. Gregory, indeed, is of opinion that God to fill us with shame calls our attention to the Temple and enjoins a close scrutiny of its measurements whenever he favors our eyes with the splendid achievements of perfect men. His design is to induce us to institute a comparison between our sinfulness and their sanctity, between our mean littleness and their stupendous sublimity, that we may take refuge in humility and clothe ourselves with a consuming zeal for holiness. Nevertheless I venture to think that we can turn to other account this reference to the Temple and its dimensions. For if the Lord filled that perverse people with shame when He set forth in detail the original grandeur and magnificence of a structure which was then nearly fallen to decay, when He made manifest, how their own negligence had brought it to ruin, when He indicated with what groans and incessant supplication they should have endeavored to shield from dire destruction what only a few years before they had considered the glory and crown of their nation, what courageous resolves we can elicit, what a store of strength we can derive from a humble sense of dread for the future, when with the far-seeing and piercing eyes of the mind we contemplate this edifice of the Society, which God's goodness not only builded, but also with a peculiar predilection preserves and prospers?

To me, therefore, the Lord appears to have ordered his Prophet to describe the Temple with all this exactness (waiving other de-

(3) III. Pet. iii., 1.

(4) Ezech. xliii., 10, 11.



signs that must occur to the attentive reader), for three particular reasons, that bear directly on the end I now have in view.

He wished his people in the first place to meditate carefully its stupendous vastness, its architectural beauty, its costly furniture. He wished them to fill themselves with an idea of the expensive care and prodigal magnificence with which His wisdom had spent itself for their good and profit, that they might conceive feelings of shame and confusion, reflecting on the ingratitude with which they had met His advances, on the sins and misdeeds which had rendered so godlike a display vain and nothing worth, and on the mad folly that drove them to 'spurn the good gift placed at their disposal. And we too, if with diligence we examine, in connection with the Prophet's description of the Temple, this masterpiece of God, our Society, we, I say, cannot but cry out with David in an ecstasy of joy and wonder, "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts: My soul longeth, and fainteth for the courts of the Lord." <sup>(5)</sup> We can enter into minutest details and study the solidity of its pillars, the spaciousness of its porticoes, the trimmings of its capitals, the treasury of its wealth, the advantages of that vessel, called in Holy Writ for its mammoth dimensions, the sea, the holiness of its altar, the multiplied variety of its sacrifices, its thousand other characteristics well worth the time to consider. Since, too, in the language of St. Augustine, talking, it is true, in another connection, God never makes ready for us a condition in life without at the same time adapting us to the condition, since no mere luck, no haphazard had play when Divine Providence, in whose sight all time is present, called each of us to live where we at present dwell, we can be certain, that at the very time when our Holy Founder, like a builder enriched with the wisdom of Heaven, was planning the design of the Society and rearing its stately proportions, the goodness of God had already settled upon what manner of men and how many were by mysterious means, known to Himself alone, to make it their abode. How then can he fail to blush and be troubled, who after due reflection discovered the

<sup>(5)</sup> Ps. lxxxiii., 1.

blinding sublimity of his vocation, and the spirit of meanness in which he has accepted the gift?

God wished His people in the second place to appreciate at its true worth the very special assistance of the Most High, resident in that Temple and promised Solomon in these words, "I have sanctified this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there forever, and my eyes and my heart shall be there always."<sup>(6)</sup> This appreciation should have excited in their hearts a certain deep and reverential awe, mingled with an anxious dread of ever profaning His house of prayer and with a lasting confidence in the rich and generous promises He had made. For the eyes and the ears of infinite wisdom and goodness were to watch forever and hear within its walls, and His protection was never to forsake Israel. And beyond all doubt from a glance at the help and care mercifully vouchsafed this least Society we can derive a full and unhesitating assurance that, if we on our part are determined to prove ourselves loyal and true sons of St. Ignatius, God will continue to protect not only ourselves but others whose welfare lies close to our hearts. Nor is this earnest of future favors a thing hidden or hard to behold. In our varied changes of fortune, in adversity and prosperity, in good and bad report, in the fruits of salvation produced in the neighbor, in innumerable other particulars, that must strike the careful student of our history with wonder and consolation, we not only recognize God, but can even, if I may use the expression, touch Him with our hands. Holy Writ counts it a great privilege that Nabusardan, who was after all only the captain of an earthly king, a mere worm and a man born to die, said to Jeremias, "I will set my eyes upon thee."<sup>(7)</sup> Who then shall presume to set bounds to the reliant trust and large hopes of the soul, when the All-powerful, He who hath done all things whatsoever He would in sky and sea and on the earth, declares that His vision is forever intently fixed upon that stronghold of safety to which in His sweet providence He has invited her? Let her therefore in reverence foster a deep consciousness of His abiding presence, let her

<sup>(6)</sup> III. Kings, ix., 3.

<sup>(7)</sup> Jer. xl., 4.

learn in the depths of her own nothingness the salutary lesson of humility, let her clothe herself within and without with confidence in God and courageous purpose, and let her pay the penalty of her ingratitude by repentant tears of compunction. There are, however, among us not a few who transgressing the bounds wisely set by our Institute move in a tumult of uninterrupted distraction and thus fail in their duty towards themselves and their neighbors. Their intercourse with externs is something besides the grace of their vocation and savors rather of the world. It is more in accord with the schemes and the empty trifles of those with whom they treat than with the Lord's interests and the double end of our Society, the salvation of souls and God's glory. Hence it comes to pass that they steal from the studies useful to their state many an hour of no earthly use to others and of positive harm to themselves. Now it is to me a solemn certainty that men of this stamp can hardly, yea, cannot at all, promise themselves the protection of Heaven or Heaven's indispensable help. Wherefore, whosoever suspects himself afflicted with a hankering after frivolity and distraction of this kind, I beseech him in the name of God's mercy to enter into serious and sober thought with himself on the matter, to strive manfully in the light of the Holy Spirit to attend to his own needs, to find his way back to the path from which he has strayed and never again to allow himself to wander aimlessly after worldly favor or the applause of the great. Let him arise from meditation fully persuaded that by vain and worldly intercourse of this nature he exposes himself, and the Society as well, to many serious dangers with incalculable loss to his own fervor and to the cause of souls. "But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."<sup>(8)</sup> These words of the Prophet are to the letter verified in them that actuated by a zeal unmixed with self verily pursue souls to salvation. As they journey through the solitudes of the world, over the ocean waste, in company with peril and death, they are wonderfully shielded by

<sup>(8)</sup> *Isaias* xl. 31.



the Lord from harm of body and soul. St. Paul, the resplendent mirror of God's ministries and the exemplar of Apostolic men, uses, when speaking of himself, much the same language.

The third end for which God described the temple so minutely was that His people might see the favorable opportunities which they had enjoyed in times past of laying up untold treasures for themselves by prayer and sacrifice. For in the temple God had built them a court, as it were, of kindly favor, where He admitted them at all times to familiar converse, and where He had set up His royal throne of mercy. These memories of the past the Lord wished His people to renew, that they might see how, through their own fault, they had not only remained destitute and without any reward but even entirely separated from Him in their misery ; and thus that they might repent of their neglect and forgetfulness of Him Whom they should always have carried about in their hearts.

And who can recall without shame and tears the many helps which are granted us in religion, in order that we may go on increasing in all virtue and holiness? And yet how little is the profit which we draw from all these things ! No otherwise, dearly beloved, should each one of us gaze intently at the Temple of our Society and measure its structure. What opportunities we have for acquiring untold wealth in the daily practice of virtue ! What inducements urge us to reach out for perfection ! What salutary incitements lie hidden in each examination of conscience ! What timely reproofs come home to us in reiterated exhortations, if only we descend to the inner chambers of our soul and there listen to God explaining them in detail and working them into our very being with all His light and strength ! How vigilant the eyes of our Superiors ! How high and strong the barrier of our Rules ! What a plentiful shower of grace from heaven in our frequent use of the Sacraments and especially in that of the most Holy Eucharist, "when I mention which," says St. Chrysostom, "I open the entire treasury of God's goodness !" What courage in the face of all our foes the munitions and ramparts of religious life inspire ! How tried and trusty

the arms prayer puts into our hands ! What safeguards in penance and corporal austerities ! How secure we are by day and by night in the keeping of Angels ! Verily I can safely say that if these advantages met with the consideration due them, we should weep for shame at the unworthy manner in which we acquit ourselves. Wherefore it is the one desire of my heart that with serious concern we cast our eyes on the deformity and baseness of our tepidity and keep them fixed awhile on the grandeur of the Master we serve, on the solemn oath we once swore, on the lavish resources religion lends us, on the rich stores of grace from God, Who called us, guided us, yea, drew us to Himself, on the certainty and magnificence of the promises made us by Him Who generously and surely rewards even the slightest services. For the King to Whom we owe allegiance is more than great. He is the King of kings, King by nature, the Author of our being, our life, our activity, and of all the good things that unceasingly flow in upon us with life. He is the King Who follows us with His eyes untiringly, not so much to inspect our deeds, as to help us. He is the King whose service is so much a law of our nature that it can find happiness in nought besides ; a thought thus beautifully put by St. Augustine : " Human nature is so constituted that subjection to God is its highest good, whilst the accomplishment of its own will in opposition to that of its maker is its direst evil." He is the King Who watches over each individual with as much pains as if that individual were the sole object of His love, the King Who is never so diligent, never so energetic in our behalf as when we cast all our cares upon Him and completely surrender ourselves to His Providence. He is, in fine, so unselfish a King, so august a Master, so tender a Father, that He must win the homage of entire and perfect submission.

St. Augustine, touching some of these points, thus writes to Armentarius : " Give back what you pledged yourselves to ! Return your being to Him from whom you have it ! What you give in payment is only seeming loss. It is in reality a new accumulation of wealth. For your creditor is kind, not needy.

He is of such a nature that the money turned into His treasury enriches only His debtors. Everything, therefore, not consecrated to Him as a gift must be accounted lost, and every gift made Him finds its way back to the giver. Briefly, we but give to Him from Whom we have wherewith to give. Because debt and debtor are in this instance identical, we recognize in the transaction no distinction between the giver and his gift. For man owes to God everything that he is, and to be happy man must surrender his entire being to Him from Whom he received it."<sup>(9)</sup> Concerning the havoc done by tepidity and all the bitter trouble experienced by a tepid soul I remember that I wrote at some length in my "Industriæ." I there called attention to the risks a soul runs of being vomited, to use the language of the Apocalypse, out of the Lord's mouth. I painted the wearisome tediousness attending the cure of this disease, in which the sufferer flatters himself and, like a fever patient, is oblivious of danger when the danger is greatest. I showed how by slow and insidious stages the soul daily loses some little of its strength, because nature as opposed to grace is always seeking its own ease and consuming the soul's substance, much as the river silently wears away its banks. I alluded to the saddest of all circumstances, that when at times such a soul elicits acts that have some semblance of good, they provoke God's anger, because the man's heart is not in his work or because he is the slave of unworthy motives. I proved that day by day the dimensions of that man's heart became too small to enclose the streams of grace which continually flow from the divine fountain, because the unfortunate man by his sluggishness robs himself of the thousand degrees of glory he could with a little effort have made his own. I treated there of these and kindred inconveniences that date their origin to that widespread disease, inconveniences in every way worthy of deep study and abundant tears. Let it now suffice to conclude with these words of St. Gregory: "Unless the strong hand of the workman is in haste to finish the work it began, mere cessation of labor tears down much of what with infinite

<sup>(9)</sup> Epist. 127.



pains was builded." This same reflection led Solomon to say, "He that is loose and slack in his work is the brother of him that wasteth his own works." <sup>(10)</sup>

Though the causes of this tepidity can generally be reduced to the heads I shall by-and-by mention, it will nevertheless be more to the point for each of us to enter into himself, to institute a diligent enquiry, and after discovering them to pluck up or at least kill these prolific sources of growth so rank and deadly. The heads that at present suggest themselves to my mind are mostly these: an undying love of self, a restless war of the passions, dread of the difficulties that must be undergone to come out of the fight victorious, a longing for things that are easy and agreeable, things usually for which nature has a marked weakness, perpetual distraction of heart, abandonment of prayer, neglect of exams, and scores of like indications that I need not here rehearse in detail. There is, however, one admonition that I must not pass over in silence. From my own experience and the experience of others I am persuaded that it can be of incalculable service. It is this. We should for hours and days at a time meditate on the greatness of the obligation we lie under of seconding God's efforts in everything. We should then compare with the magnitude of this obligation the slothful methods we employ in its discharge. What ought to be deplored in the case of men in the world, that in the case of religious ought to be the subject of intenser feeling and more copious tears. For we religious from the very nature of our vocation, from the abundant opportunities we enjoy, from the richness and numbers of the favors conferred upon us, must acquit ourselves of this duty with magnanimity. To put this matter in a clearer light and to ponder it well, we can with some ease keep it forever before our mind by choosing from among the many resplendent perfections in God's simple nature twelve which undeniably exact from our gratitude commensurate homage.

Let these twelve be His majestic grandeur, His limitless presence, His inalienable right of domain over all creation, the Provi-

<sup>(10)</sup> Prov. xviii. 9.

dence with which He rules the universe, the benefits with which He has blessed us, His wisdom, His beauty, His ineffable sweetness, His effusive generosity, His love, His gift of breath and life to the soul, His gift of Himself to the soul as the centre and term of its happiness.

His majestic grandeur must evoke within us feelings of reverence and fear as deep, if I may be pardoned the expression, as the depths of the sea. Ezechiel in vision saw the Cherubim suddenly stop still and fold their wings at sound of the first faint whispers of His voice from out the firmament which arched their heads with the likeness, as it were, of sapphire. St. Jerome on this passage of the Prophet, says, "they behaved as though unable to hear the voice of God and live." Who then shall measure the depth of the reverence and the silence of the fear in His presence which become us contemptible worms of the earth? In this spirit the Apostle addresses the Hebrews, "We have grace, whereby let us serve, pleasing God with fear and reverence. For our God is a consuming fire."<sup>(11)</sup> The Greek expression in the above passage involves something more than the idea of mere reverence. It signifies a reverence mingled with confusion and shame.

God's limitless presence manifestly demands in us an uncommon cleanness of body and mind and an unparalleled energy in our actions. He is the eye of intelligence itself ever and always beaming upon us, weighing with care what goes on without and within us, closer to us than our inmost thoughts, and considering, to use the expression of Job, "the steps of our feet." Neither would it at all become us to piece together our ill-jointed and misshapen deeds in sight and presence of Him whose eyes, as Wisdom says, "are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and the bottom of the deep, and looking into the hearts of men, into the most secret parts."<sup>(12)</sup> Then too His limitless presence should inspire us with courage and stoutness of soul. For each glance of His eye sustains us, strengthens us, and fills us with a new vigor. So lovingly does He speak to our hearts

<sup>(11)</sup> Hebr. xii. 28, 29.

<sup>(12)</sup> Eccli. xxiii. 28.

and so sweetly does He draw us along that St. Dionysius hesitates not, when speaking of God's name and perfections, to attribute to Him an appellation which in Greek plainly means, that He leads us perpetually by the hand.

In writing of His inalienable right of dominion over all creation He is with justice styled the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, the God of Gods ; not merely the Lord of all, nor yet the only true Lord, but the source as well of all empire and of all ownership. This title without doubt exacts from us prompt obedience, implicit and voluntary servitude. We are bound to His service not by any contract or agreement, not by any advantage we expect to derive from the alliance, as happens in the case of other rulers ; but by the very condition of our nature, by the very fact that everything created is His property and peculiar possession. Nay more, our nature is so constituted that it can compass its design in life and attain to rest only when entirely and completely subject to Him Who made us what we are. Besides, all creatures are His obedient slaves. Whence the Prophet says, " By thy ordinance the day goeth on : for all things serve thee. " <sup>(13)</sup> And another Prophet, " The light obeyeth him with trembling. The stars have given light in their watches and rejoiced. They were called, and they said ; ' Here we are, ' and with cheerfulness they shined forth to him that made them. " <sup>(14)</sup> It is but just, then, that man fashioned like to the Angels should obey God in everything with all the exactness and readiness within his reach. For the Angels, because endowed with intellect and will, render to their Maker a vaster homage. Nor should man ever forget in the meantime to bewail with tears and groans the sad fact that he has often exiled God from his affections. If to these circumstances we add the oath we solemnly pledged in our vows and the holocaust we then made of our entire selves only to enjoy the liberty of more completely serving God, what stupendous proportions, sweet Lord, the mountain heap of our debt assumes !

God's providence stands ever at our side in the capacity of an

<sup>(13)</sup> Ps. cxviii. 91.

<sup>(14)</sup> Baruch iii. 33-35.



adviser, beckoning us hither and warning us thence, encouraging and guiding us. This favor should beget in us a sense of resignation as childlike and as deep as that described by the Prince of the Apostles, "Casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you."<sup>(15)</sup> In every event of fortune, no matter whence it comes, in adversity as well as in prosperity, we should have ever ready on our lips that prayer of prayers, which St. Leo exhorts the children of the Church to enshrine in their memories, "Father . . . not my will, but thine be done!"<sup>(16)</sup> The Saint's exhortation has a peculiar emphasis when addressed to such as in a spirit of self-denial waive all rights to liberty of action and dedicate themselves as whole-burnt offerings to their Father in heaven. Could we but once master this lesson, we would be always on our guard, and should experience enduring comfort, incomparably superior to every other joy, a comfort the like of which inundated the soul of him who after frequently repeating, "My heart is ready, O God!" broke forth into these words: "I will sing and I will give praise. Arise, my glory: arise psaltery and harp!" That is the kind of gladness resident in real resignation, that is the kind of praise a resigned heart renders to God!

One cannot consider God's manifold kindnesses without, as it were, instinctively experiencing within himself sincere emotions of gratitude, appreciation, thanksgiving, and hearty responsiveness. For if in intercourse between man and man ingratitude is beyond bearing, what must be its enormity when displayed towards God. His favors are so multiplied and so rich, our need of them is so constant and so absolute. His kindness is so devoid of selfishness and constraint, and the hand with which He blesses is so far beyond our reach that ingratitude towards God assumes proportions beyond our comprehension. St. Augustine and St. Bernard ascribe to this sin whatever harm overtakes us and hinders our progress in piety. Ingratitude is, indeed, as these Fathers well remark, a burning wind blasting everything in its journey from the desert and drying up the well-springs of God's mercy towards ungrateful men.

<sup>(15)</sup> I. Pet. v. 7.<sup>(16)</sup> Luke xxii. 42.

Wisdom in the teacher makes a pupil attentive and earnest. It exercises upon him a kind of gentle violence, constraining him to listen silently and absorb point by point the lessons conveyed. And oh ! what store of truths this Master of our hearts has to unfold ! The topics He discusses are our own shortcomings, the ravishing beauty of virtue, the royal road we should keep, things hidden from the silly lovers of the world, the path that leads up to God. Wherefore Isaias, "He wakeneth in the morning, in the morning he wakeneth my ear that I may hear him as a master." <sup>(17)</sup> He teaches us to cultivate a healthy distrust of ourselves, to stand in holy awe of God's secret ways, to make humble acknowledgment of our unworthiness and nothingness, to build our hopes on help from Heaven, "for vain is the salvation of man." <sup>(18)</sup> To sum up in the words of the Holy Spirit, He teaches us "temperance and prudence and justice and fortitude, which are such things as man can have nothing more profitable in life." <sup>(19)</sup> Wisdom would indeed have an easy task, if we summoned our strength and, though hemmed in on all sides by the rubble and ruin of our crumbled edifice, bent our heads to catch the gentle whispers of her sweet voice ; if with all the noise of outside care grown still, we only sat and listened to her enthroned within the inner chambers of our soul. For it always remains true that she is ever on the alert for new scholars. On this account the Holy Ghost, after having said of wisdom, "He that waketh early to seek her, shall not labor : for he shall find her sitting at his door," straightway adds, "She sheweth herself to them cheerfully in the ways and meeteth them with all providence." <sup>(20)</sup> In this passage the Greek word, which our interpretation rendered "providence," signifies something more. It means a thing wrought out at the expense of much thoughtful planning. The correct sense, therefore, is that God not only waits for us at our door, but even runs to meet us in the way, with bright and cheerful countenance, and leaving nothing untried He thinks of every expedient to attract our notice. Such is God's unbounded goodness, such His absorbing wish to perfect our being.

<sup>(17)</sup> Isa. i. 4.<sup>(18)</sup> Ps. lix. 13.<sup>(19)</sup> Wisd. viii. 7.<sup>(20)</sup> Wisd. vi. 15, 17.

Whoever has eyes to see must perceive that beauty, beauty as ravishing as that of the Godhead, which should excite a certain holy longing, coupled with an indescribable contempt for everything created. But who will venture forth on the limitless ocean of God's beauty and attempt to explore it? Why, the Wise Man was, if we believe some interpreters, speaking of mere created wisdom, a gift familiar to ourselves, a raindrop in that vast expanse of water, when he said, "She is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars: being compared with the light she is found before it."<sup>(21)</sup> Let him, who will, examine in Holy Writ the passages resplendent with descriptions of this beauty. Let him peruse the Fathers in their treatises on the same subject. St. Dionysius "On God's Names" is especially worthy of study, as he seems to have been vouchsafed a close view of this transcendent loveliness. It is certainly our most solemn task to cleanse our eyes and fit them for the spectacle by cultivating pureness of heart. For, as St. Augustine, with a force of his own, observes, the eye given to things unclean cannot in this life behold it. And beyond the grave, when the veil falls from God's face, only they can feast their eyes upon the sight, who when pilgrims on earth at the expense of tireless devotion kept their vision clear, or contracted so little dust, that a short sojourn in Purgatory can remedy the disorder. Without doubt the first blissful effect experienced by a soul in these surroundings will be an insurmountable loathing and utter contempt of everything less than God. This thought led St. Augustine in his work, "On the City of God,"<sup>(22)</sup> to say of the Angels, whose qualities and characteristics we should assume as far as the unfavorable circumstances of our present condition allow, "On fire with a holy love of His incorporeal beauty, a beauty outside the sphere of change and fairer than human speech can tell, they scorn every lower thing, everything not God; they scorn their very selves. Their single purpose is to enjoy every particle of that universal good, whose sweetest gift is their own individual

<sup>(21)</sup> Wisd. vii. 29.<sup>(22)</sup> Book 9, c. 22.



goodness." Speaking of this lovely sight I cannot pass over in silence the circumstance, that we cannot linger within its influence without becoming ourselves things of beauty, without becoming its living likenesses. For, as St. Bernard repeats from the Apostle, a soul bathed in the rays of God's loveliness, is "transformed into the same image from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord."<sup>(23)</sup> No mere created beauty can accomplish a result so precious, so sublime that it passes conception. St. Augustine, explaining these words of the Psalmist, "O God who is like to thee?" thus encourages us, "Man must keep close to God, as close as wax to the sealing-ring. Only by like contact can he hope to catch the impress of his Creator's features. Only by like contact can he experience the full meaning of the words, 'It is good for me to cleave to God.' Such a man never loses the image and likeness stamped upon him when he was created."<sup>(24)</sup>

To detect sweetness of flavor a certain healthiness of palate and unimpaired sense of taste are indispensably necessary. Wherefore, whatever savors of the earth must be religiously avoided, as it renders impossible a just appreciation of God. Oh, how wretched to think that earthly cares and pleasures hinder us from tasting the sweetness of God. Nor can we, with St. Gregory for witness, doubt that our venial sins at times, when allowed to accumulate, lessen to a degree beyond belief our measure of interior enjoyment.<sup>(25)</sup> God's sweetness supposes on our part repeated tasting, and if I may be allowed the expression, a kind of relish, and as a necessary consequence a certain insatiable hunger. But from continued absence in the soul of all craving for God it sometimes comes to pass, as the same saint declared, that "we, pitiable outcasts, become enamored of our empty longings." They, on the contrary, who exercise a vigilance over their tastes and spare no pains to render them fit for visitations from heaven, receive as reward some small portion of God's sweetness and conceive so intense a love for chaste pleasure that they spurn everything earthly and burn with a desire to eat and drink at the table of the Lamb.

<sup>(23)</sup> II. Cor. iii. 18.<sup>(24)</sup> In Ps. lxx. 19.<sup>(25)</sup> In I. Kings, ii. 1.

God's liberality is foundation for unwavering perseverance in prayer, yea, for a perseverance that, so to speak, passes the limits of patience and refuses to be sent away empty. St. Bernard on account of the confidence and magnanimity to which it gives birth, hesitated not to say that we ought in spirit keep our eyes forever fixed on God and our souls wide open "for a rich blessing from Him who never returned empty-handed from the feasts to which He sits down in Heaven." We must, therefore, with prayers besiege Him in season and out of season, and never doubt of the result. We must throw wide open the portals of our heart to receive His good gifts and perfect blessings. We can in our supplication derive courage from the thought that they turn on objects calculated to make us more acceptable in His sight and to draw us closer and closer to Himself. Our desires are not chained down to the meaner and baser things of earth. To pray for paltry trifles of that sort is to insult, as Cassian says, a liberal and munificent Father, Who stands ready to bestow upon us favors greater beyond compare. "Let us go, therefore, with confidence to the throne of grace." <sup>(26)</sup>

Love is love's willing captive, love is strong as death, love's only recompense is love. I know of nothing more humiliating, no greater subject of shame than the reflection that we make so poor a return for the affection lavished upon us by a king who can discover in no corner of our being a trait worthy of His love, unless that love first enters in and produces it. Our meanness in this matter is all the more deplorable because, as St. Bernard remarks, it is by love and by love alone that we can make any return to God. "For when God sets about loving," says the Father, "His one wish is to be loved in return. He has no other design because He knows full well that His friends possess in that love of Him a passport to beatitude." Somewhat earlier in his discourse the Saint had said that though God must be feared as sovereign Lord and honored as Father of all, "the fear and the honor will be spurned unless they are seasoned with the honey of love." He concludes

<sup>(26)</sup> Hebr. iv. 16.

with these memorable words, "Love is a rare possession only when it journeys back to God, its origin ; only when at rest in His bosom, the source of all love, it derives from this source of all love wherewith to live on forever." For ourselves a cursory review of the worthless and unworthy things that exile us from this love leave us nought but the cold comfort of sighs and tears. Self-love, true love's deadliest foe, most bitter and most ungrateful, binds chains about us and keeps us back from God in spite of the fact that we ought, to use St. Hilary's words, "lay ourselves entire at the feet of Him to Whom very memory refers our origin and rise." And, therefore, to compel us by a law to the love we owe, after authorizing us to address Him by the endearing name of "Ours," "Thou shalt love," He says, "with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength." This too, although man's whole heart, his whole soul, his whole mind, his whole strength, mean so little that St. Bernard with reason cried out, "The God of infinite love loves us with a boundless love, and can we hope duly to requite His love?" The same Saint in his sermon on the Canticle of Canticles speaks as follows, "The spouse with justice seals her heart to every other feeling save that of love, the only recompense commensurate with the bridegroom's advances. Because even should she by a supreme effort gather her whole being into one act of love, what a trifle that raindrop of human affection would be compared with the ocean of God's love!" This thought should by all means urge us to be ever on the alert and to let slip no favorable chance to arm ourselves for a fight to the death with selfishness and for the victory that will at last enthrone God's love in our hearts. It should stay our strength till we can make with the spouse the proud boast, "Ordinavit in me caritatem." Assuming for the moment the military usage of the term, "ordinare," this phrase means that He had by a wonderful condescension of goodness raised over us the standard of His love, to protect us and save the cause of our Lord and Master, in which is bound up all our good.



As long as a soul, unfaithful to her King's interests and rebellious, does not maliciously thrust aside so indispensable and so secure a shield, she can without dread of disappointment feel sure that no force will separate her from that King. Hence the lofty defiance of St. Paul, that vessel of election, "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword?"<sup>(27)</sup> And in truth what tribulation need he fear, Lord Jesus, who is strengthened from within by the force resident in Thy counsel and consolation? What distress can oppress him whose heart throbs and expands in Thee, for whom the universe is too confined? What famine can have horrors for him who is nourished and made glad with the Bread of Life? What nakedness can prove a hardship for him who is clothed and arrayed in garments of glory? To what danger will he fall a prey, who rises on the wings of Thy love high above all shifting changes? What persecution can break the spirit of him over whom in quiet slumber Thy right hand and Thy left hover, who lies down to sleep within the shadow of Thy shoulders? What sword has wounds for him, whom the tower of Thy strength hides and shelters roundabout? Not without reason, therefore, the Apostle, strong with a confidence born of humility, subjoins these words, "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, . . . nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." St. Augustine in his commentary on this passage has so many divinely fervid reflections, so many happy thoughts that even if my desire to be brief forbids me to enumerate all, I must call attention to these few. "No threats of death," he says, "can separate us from God, simply because our love of God can die only by cessation; and death itself consists in not loving God. Not to love God is in other words to choose and follow after something in preference to God. No promise of life can separate us from God, for no promise of water will separate us from the fountain. No Angel can separate us from God; for no Angel is stronger than our soul when

<sup>(27)</sup> Rom. viii. 35.

invested with the strength of God. No powers can accomplish this dread result ; for if the powers here mentioned are such as wield a wicked influence in this world, the soul that nestles close to God is raised high above the whole world. Impending evils are equally weak, because the nearer we keep to Him from Whom these evils endeavor to withdraw us the more endurable we make them. No promise of future blessing can separate us from God, since whatever good awaits us in the future God promises with more assuring pledges. Besides, nothing is better than God Himself, and God is never far from such as remain true to Him. Nor height nor depth can separate us, for if the high and deep places of this earth are meant, who can make me a promise of heaven and at the same time deny me the company of Heaven's Maker? Or what hell can have terrors enough to drive me from God's service, since my abandonment of His sweet service made hell a possibility? "

God's gift of breath and life to the soul makes it incumbent upon us to live every moment for Him by Whose favor we live, and to render our whole life, every feeling and emotion of our soul worthy of their origin. Concerning this life of the soul St. Bernard in his treatise, "*De Præcepto et Dispensatione*," thus argues: "If the soul enamored of God lives with His life as the body lives with that of the soul, how, I pray, can it be contended that the soul is closer to the body, to which it merely gives life, than it is to God from whom it has life? If love is the fountain-head of life, not to drink of that fountain is to die ; and the saving draught is an impossibility unless the soul fights her way and stands close to the brink of the fountain of God's love. To live, therefore, is to refer to God every movement of the heart ; to withhold one single breath of love from Him is to die." From these considerations we can conceive some idea of the zeal with which we must avoid whatever can prevent our daily actions from deriving all their vitality from this spirit of love. Wherefore, we must first and foremost keep vigilant watch against the entrance of mortal sin. This enemy inflicts a death-wound upon the heart, and at once steals away that higher life of the soul. It leaves the soul a decayed

and unwholesome corpse, motionless, dead to sense, and fit only to be buried. Hence the warning of the Wise man, "With all watchfulness keep thy heart, because life issueth out from it." <sup>(29)</sup> We must with no less care keep aloof from venial sin and from imperfections of the graver sort. They are the diseases and poison-freighted humors of the soul. They, as it were, silently gnaw themselves into the very seat of our spiritual being. They get in the way, they keep us back, and, finally, cut us off altogether from the vital influence of the Spirit of God, the origin of our soul's life, growth, and emotions. If in the light of this illustration derived from the bodily infirmities which we are at such pains to shake off, we took careful note of occurrences within us, we would be untiring in our efforts and would leave no means untried to free ourselves from these infirmities of the spirit. We would be ever on the alert and would make our activity an evident token that we are instinct with life descended from Heaven.

Finally, if we with some little measure of attention consider that God is the distant point in which our supreme happiness centres, we cannot avoid the necessary conclusion that we must unremittingly and with a certain kind of energetic impatience press forward towards Him. Every means must be called into service to shorten the journey, not only our state of life, but also, as is plain from our Rules, every exertion of our energy, our thoughts, our words, our deeds. The perfection towards which this universe of things unceasingly hastens consists in unending motion towards a centre or position. If masses would be considered peculiarly out of place, because their weight or want of weight would set them down where they did not belong, far sadder is our lot when we settle ourselves outside of God. And we settle outside of God unless our every act with the help of His love tends and tends steadily towards Him. This reflection should fill us with a just appreciation of the enormity of venial sin and should inspire us with a holy zeal against its dangerous consequences. For venial sin checks the soul in her progress towards God. St. Denis

<sup>(29)</sup> Prov. iv. 23.



describes evil as "something devoid of purpose, beside the mark or out of line with the true aim." If therefore from among a hundred thoughts elicited, for example, during the course of a single day, more than ninety fall wide of the mark and miss the centre, let us pause, I pray you, and consider how unsightly and loathsome this manner of life should be in our eyes. Let no one tell me that because of human frailty we cannot hope without a special favor of God to avoid all venial sin. Let no one tell me that venial sin is of so frequent occurrence that we all without exception experience at times its baneful influence. I know full well that the flesh is at war with the spirit, that concupiscence lights and tends a consuming fire in our members. I know with St. Gregory Nazianzen that not only are we of a composite nature, but that nature is composed of opposing elements, that is to say : not only are we hampered by the munitions of war, but we are ourselves the very field of battle. True, but let no one offer this as an excuse for sin : "Ad excusandas excusationes in peccatis." For the answer straightway presents itself. If we cannot avoid every single venial sin, we can still avoid many. He will commit but very few venial sins who scents the danger from afar, who cuts loose from occasions, who when overtaken by negligence has recourse to the compunction of tears. The number will dwindle into insignificance if he ever stands watchful guard over his thoughts and words, if he reins close the desires of his heart, if he repeatedly enters into sober communion with himself, if he casts these bundles of straw, these minor imperfections, into the furnace of Christ's love.

As long as he pursues faithfully this line of conduct he will of a certainty repress many disordered and idle movements, little conducive to the destiny of his being. Then, though obstacles will not be wanting, obstacles that like side-attractions delay him on the way, his love of God, gathering force as he goes, will brush aside these obstacles as so many motes of dust. What thin strand of thread wrapped round about a huge boulder of stone, would

prevent it from breaking loose and thundering to the ground? In his own happy way, so full of point and sweetness, St. Augustine thus expresses the same truth, "nothing," he says, "is so hard, nothing so ironlike that love's fires cannot soften it. With love the soul will soar even up to God. On the fair and radiant pinions which lift chaste love to God's bosom, she will with wondrous freedom wing her flight far above earthly tortures."<sup>(30)</sup> Then he alludes to the example of that most valiant woman, the mother of the Machabees, who, strong with the strength of God's love, snapped asunder the adamantine chains that bind a mother to her children, a human being to life, as though they were lines in a spider's web. "What wonder," he says, "if the love of God that thrilled her every fibre triumphed over the butcher-tyrant, over pain, over the sensitiveness of her body, the weakness of her sex and the affection she lavished on her offspring!" Finally, to hit the mark appointed we must aim high, our arrows are so prone to drop, so weak the bow with which we shoot. This saying of Cassian we must never let depart from our memory, "The servants of God should ever strive to realize even in this life what is true of the blessed in the life to come, that God is their all in all. He will compass this result by cherishing one only desire, by ministering to one only thirst, by referring to one only object all his deeds and all his thoughts."

From all the reflections thus far suggested it must be evident that the servant of God, seriously bent on rendering due homage to his Lord and Master, must faithfully acquit himself of these several duties. He must move in God's presence with respect and reverence. His purity must be angelic, his activity untiring. His obedience must be ready, his service continual. His dependence must be so entire that he await only a nod from the Master. His hymn of thanksgiving must be unceasing. His earnestness must be that of the tractable and diligent pupil. He must be a man of one desire, intent on enjoying God. His spiritual taste must be

<sup>(30)</sup> De Mor. Eccles. 22.

free from blemish and he must hunger for God's sweetness. Prayers and petitions must be forever on his lips and his heart must be opened wide for favors. If he cannot love as much as he ought to love, he must love with all the ardor that Heaven lends him. He must live always for God and in God. He must never tarry in his progress towards God, our last end and the cause of all our happiness. Only one result can be the outcome of a studied glance at these truths with the piercing eyes of faith. Let a man, to use the beautiful language applied by Scripture to the painstaking artist, give his mind to the resemblance of the picture made up of these colors, and to the finish of details; and let him give his watching to arrange them to perfection. Such a man must feel profoundly humble when, face to face with the Lord, he sees himself so far removed from the sanctity depicted in this brief enumeration of God's attributes. He must experience a strong desire to shake off his wonted tepidity and lay hold of the means that can every day carry him with giant strides towards perfection. But to accomplish this it is not enough merely to sit and listen to a reader. It is not enough to speed over these thoughts in a hurried and superficial way. It is necessary to let them sink deeply into the mind and carefully to review them, now all together, now one at a time. We can readily hope that such treatment of them will work great and uncommon spiritual advantages to men of good will, who have long since freed themselves from the shackles of this world; to men who have full often tasted God's gifts, yea, God Himself; to men of the stamp required by our Society.

And here let me conclude. I said at the outset that God exacts of us a hearty co-operation with the grace of our vocation. I said that the consciousness of the little we have done, though called to so sublime a state of life, should fill us with grief and shame. Even so let me now close by introducing that illustrious doctor, St. Ambrose, who with illustrations drawn from the arena urges us in beautiful and forcible language to lead the lives we profess to lead. "We are gladiators; and the combat is begun. Gladiators are crowned after the victory not before it. Our battle is with the world.



Overcome the world first, then expect the crown, for no one is crowned until the fight is over. Do men, who run a race, receive the prize before they have covered the distance? Keep up the struggle till the very end. To earn the reward of his skill and prowess the gladiator has more than one victory to win, the soldier has more than one battle to fight. Even so you are engaged in mortal combat with more than one passion. After you have sent to earth the higher passions, anger will stand on their dead bodies. Would, oh, would that Christ's champion were always unconquerable and victorious! Would that at every period of his life he were resplendent with every kind of virtue! Would that the apostle's proud boast were ever on his lips, "In all these things we overcome because of him that hath loved us."<sup>(31)</sup> In the name therefore of God's mercy, in the name of the tender love of Christ Jesus, our single hope, let us all arise from sleep. Let us employ these spiritual exercises with such a will and with such a fervor, let us speed ourselves on to exalted sanctity with such determination, that throughout the whole Society a harvest may be reaped even more abundant than any which ever before with God's blessing rejoiced our hearts. Let us all in anticipation of this happy consummation pray the Lord for a speedy and plentiful shower of grace.

From Rome, the twenty-fourth day of June, 1604, the day consecrated to that bright and shining light, the glorious Precursor.

The servant of all in the Lord,

CLAUDE ACQUAVIVA.

<sup>(31)</sup> Rom. viii., 37.

## VII.

LETTER OF VERY REVEREND CLAUDE ACQUAVIVA TO THE PROVINCIALS OF THE SOCIETY ON THE RECITATION OF THE DIVINE OFFICE AND THE CELEBRATION OF MASS.

“Sing praises unto our God, sing ye: sing praises to our king, sing ye. For God is the king of all the earth.”<sup>(1)</sup> Thus the Royal Psalmist extols the peerless grandeur of Christ, the Lord, and conveys at the same time with wondrous skill the lesson of reverence and attention due the recitation of the Divine Office. And that the manner of saying it should not be careless, but seriously becoming so sacred a duty he closes the verse with the sober warning, “Sing ye wisely.” A phrase so full of meaning for us whom Holy Church has appointed to this ministry for the purpose of hymning unending praises to God in her name and that of all creation, of pleading for all, and of pouring out our hearts before God, the all-powerful Maker of the world. If to the words of the psalmist we add the powerful language drawn from the holy Fathers, we shall see most clearly our obligation of carrying out the advice of the apostle to “sing with spirit, sing with heart.”

However, as our manner of life is such that study, constant intercourse with the neighbor, and other duties undertaken to promote God’s greater glory dispense us from choir, according to our Institute and with approbation of the Holy See, yet the private recital of the Divine Office demands greater watchfulness, that the reverence which would attend our presence in choir among our assembled brethren, and amidst the external circumstance and ceremony of God’s holy temple be not wholly wanting, but more than compensated for by those aids which surround us in such abundance. And the greater stress should be put on this point, as there is everything to fear, lest the absence of external helps make us lose some of our wonted reverence and attention.

<sup>(1)</sup> Ps. xvii. 7, 8.

As regards the time of reciting the Office, we should not allow ourselves to be so overburdened with work that we are obliged to postpone this sacred duty to most unseemly hours ; nor should the privilege of anticipating or deferring, granted in case of need, render us negligent or thoughtless in the selection of the time. We should have a great care, also, as to the place where we recite our Office, as well as our posture and bearing. For though it is not my intention to prescribe that the Divine Office be recited in the church, chapel, or each one's private room, kneeling or otherwise, for some allowance must be made for the fatigue consequent upon long hours of study, or for the weariness arising from the ministry, still most assuredly to perform this duty as though it were an indifferent task, in a place where one is subject to constant salutations, and such like distractions, would be altogether quite unsuited for prayer and, as is clear, all reverence and attention be lost. I am sure that if we but consider the matter carefully, and examine the force of nature and our habits, our inconstancy of purpose, our devotion, and our past experience, we shall see how important for us in particular is this suggestion.

For though some possess the physical strength to kneel during prayer ; still they do not enjoy the same fixedness of attention and spiritual relish in that position as in sitting. Others experience no inconvenience in walking, but rather an inclination to give themselves with greater freedom to heavenly contemplation. Still, if experience has shown any one that in this or that position he has not succeeded and nevertheless out of disgust for retirement and the privacy of his chamber, he continues in this practice, surely he must know that this is in no way pleasing to God. If, however, owing to weariness or weakness there is need of some relaxation, it would be well before commencing the Office to walk about quietly meditating the while on some pious theme, thus unbending the mind and preparing for the Divine Office. If we were also to bear in mind that the Office is made up in great part of the Psalms, it would help not a little to the acquiring of that spiritual relish at which we are aiming.



For so many and such beautiful encomiums on the Psalms have been written by the Holy Fathers, especially by St. John Chrysostom in his 6th Homily on Penance, by St. Ambrose and St. Augustine in their Preface to the Psalms, wherein such heavenly sweetness abounds, as to be well worth our reading. Hence, if we would endeavor to recite them, even with but slight preparation, I have no doubt we should soon feel in our souls their wonderful effects and taste their spiritual sweetness. As a consequence we should never grow weary, no matter how long the Office, but ever experience new and varied charms.

For many, perhaps, the opposite has been the experience, reciting this part of the Divine Office in an almost lifeless manner, they have been wearied with its dryness and seeming unending length. It would be well to call to mind the words of St. Gregory speaking on this subject: "What manner of praise is that or what power can it have if it come not from the heart? Rightly then were three equal measures of flour offered, with the three calves." He is speaking of the offering made by the mother of Samuel, "signifying that the praises we offer to God with our lips are made full by the devotion of our hearts. For to sing the praises of God with our lips and have our hearts far from Him, is to offer our sacrifices unmingled with the flour of completion. But if we utter with joyous hearts the words of God in hymns of praise and petition, and with that gladness of spirit mingle a right understanding we shall add to the flour of sacrifice a full measure of that wine which cheers the heart of man."

And then what a variety of sentiment appears in every verse of the Psalms, expressed in language so tenderly sweet, yet strong withal; what wondrous subtlety is there, not poetic, indeed, but divine, which charms the spirit so irresistibly, and composes itself within our hearts, while their beauty surpasses all understanding. Hence, therefore, as St. Augustine remarks, who calls the Psalms the mirror of the soul, we ought to give expression to the varying sentiments of the Psalmist: to fear when the Prophet fears; to praise when he praises; to love when he loves; to weep when he

weeps ; to implore when he implores ; and what most of all contributes to that necessary renewal of our attention, to raise our hearts to God when the Prophet raises his ; to humble ourselves when he acknowledges his nothingness ; to pray for our enemies when he prays for his ; beseeching the Almighty that His Church be exalted when thus the Psalmist prays ; loving the beauty of the spouse of Christ and longing to taste the sweetness of His words, opening our hearts to drink in fulness the liberty of the children of God, offering to the Eternal Father, Christ, our Mediator in the surer hope of obtaining what He has already won for us. Then again giving free scope to our minds in our wandering flights through the heavenly Jerusalem, thanking our God in full for our freedom from Egypt's bondage, taking our great delight and slaking our thirst in those streams of living waters springing from the rock, exulting at the sight of God's enemies vanquished, and begging new strength against their toils and their power ; gaining fresh courage at the thought of the numberless saints of God, who have fought the good fight and are already crowned. In a word giving free scope to any pious affection that God's Holy Spirit may kindle within us. For even in this our day the spirits of evil are dispelled and driven far from us by the sweet sounds of Psalmody.

That we may come to know how we ought to recite these psalms, and to partake of all their spiritual nourishment, I cannot do better than quote that very apt passage of Cassian, where discoursing on prayer he speaks so full of unction of the Psalms : " If you wish to feel within your soul those holy sentiments of the Psalmist begin the singing of them as if you yourself had written them and not the Psalmist, breathing forth from the depths of your soul a prayer wholly your own ; or again imagine those words as spoken to you personally, not as something of the past, fulfilled in the person of the Prophet but as being enacted and fulfilled in your every day life. Then will Holy Scripture become clearer and its hidden meaning will be unfolded before us, when our own experience has taught us these same truths."

After mentioning some of the sentiments of the Psalms Cassian adds: "All these holy affections we shall see so expressed in the Psalms that beholding as in an untarnished mirror what is therein contained, we shall come to a more perfect understanding of them and thus taught by this master of sentiment we shall strive after them not as for something we have merely seen, but as for what we have felt in the depth of our souls. That we may attain this end there are, besides purity of heart, which diligent examination and generous striving can obtain, two other requisites most essential. One, that we select for our reading an author who has briefly yet clearly and spiritually written an exposition of the Psalms, in which I think Cardinal Bellarmine is very happy. Another, that our meditation be brought to bear on this point; so that if in reciting any verse God bestows His light on us or arouses in our soul some pious affection, afterwards in the quiet of our chamber we make this the matter of our meditation. And as he who has been shown a mine of silver or gold, will greedily work it, so, when the treasure is more precious, let us not be found wanting, for surely we shall find riches. In a single verse we have read over and over again, Christ our Lord will oftentimes discover to us a veritable mint of spiritual treasure. Let us but be diligent, as the Wise Man admonishes us: "If thou shalt seek her as money, and shalt dig for her as for a treasure: Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and shalt find the knowledge of God." (2)

It was my intention to conclude my letter here, but at the urgent and zealous request of some of the fathers, I shall add a few words on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Were I not aware that, at times, owing to the darkening of our minds, our natural weakness, and that deplorable inconstancy of purpose, we are found remiss in many things and even in this sacred duty, I would not venture to speak to you on so exalted a subject whose own inherent dignity and sublimity are more than sufficient to arouse in us sentiments of fear, reverence, and real, earnest devotion. It will suffice for the present to call your attention to one point.

(2) Prov. ii. 4, 5.



Let us consider the Mass as a sacrifice, and examine to Whom it is offered and the Victim thereof; what the end of the sacrifice is, and the manner of offering it. Even though the oblation were of pigeons and doves and fatlings according to the rites of the Old Law, yet what awe and purity and reverence should not accompany an offering made unto God, the Sovereign Ruler of heaven and earth. If, then we but reflect that Christ Himself, the only begotten Son of God, sitting at the right hand of the Father, is at the same time the real High Priest and Victim, it will not be difficult to see how supereminently greater is the dignity of our oblation.

Then, too, reflect upon the end and intention of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The salvation of the living and the dead, the union of God's Holy Church, the pouring out our thankfulness to God and praising His infinite majesty show us too clearly what is expected of us. Lastly, try to comprehend, if you can, the sacrificial rite, so far beyond our human ken; for not only is our offering made before the Angels and the whole celestial Court, but it is given to us to touch, handle, and become real participators in this great Sacrifice.

If we consider the Mass as a Sacrament we shall see most clearly how carefully we should prepare for it and with what sentiments of loving piety we should approach it. For from it, as from a stream and fountain-head, we drink in our life blood and grow incorporate into Christ, and share in His sanctity and glory, according to Christ's own words "The glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them."<sup>(3)</sup> And St. Hilary says that these words are to be understood of this sacrament. Nor is this to be understood of that remote preparation of which St. Gregory Nazianzen writes in his Apology: that our lives should be ever so pure and holy that whatsoever object meet our gaze, we turn at once to praise and admire the Creator; our ear so alert to God's counsels and command that they be heard in everything; our mouths, lips, and tongue so composed as ever to be ready to drink in, as from heaven, the saving draught of life; the voice, as if the attuned harps of the Holy Spirit

<sup>(3)</sup> John xvii, 22.

were ever giving forth sweetest harmony in praise of the one, living God, and the feet, like the stag on the mountain side, should cling fast to the rock of eternal truth and know no path that leads from God. All our members, in truth, sealed in justice and death being no more, should serve only for life eternal.

There is no question, I repeat, of that remote preparation, but of that more immediate and actual. And I confess I am not a little disturbed when I reflect on those words of St. Bonaventure: "When thou shalt have become wholly transformed, and as, I may say divine, that you see in everything nothing but God, then approach the altar." As it is unnecessary and inopportune to mention here what St. Denis, St. Chrysostom, the two Cyrils, and in a word, all the holy Fathers have written on this point yet I must mention what St. John Damascene says: "With ardent longings let us draw near and with our hands held in the form of a cross let us thus receive the Body of the Crucified. And keeping guard over our eyes, lips and whole countenance let us partake of this divine fire, that the ardor of our own desires becoming united with this sacred fire, our sins may be purged away and our hearts inflamed with this burning love be changed into God." Our priestly character bids us aspire to this. Hence without some previous preparation which will put aside all thought of business and worldly affairs, we ought never approach these sublime mysteries. Nor should we ever forget ourselves so far as to begin the "Impone, Domine, capiti meo" as soon as we enter the sacristy; but, some previous recollection being supposed, it would be well to reflect briefly on what we are about to do and where we are going. The rule, too, prescribing half an hour for Mass should be carefully observed. For if it be shorter, there will surely be a lack of that becoming gravity and distinction of ceremony so proper to this great action. Here I would call the attention of our sacristans and prefects of the church that they warn superiors of anything done contrary to these rules. When the celebration of Mass, that so sublime ministry, is finished and while Christ Our Lord is as yet corporally present within us, let us make our thanksgiving. And

here the Church offers us the hymn of the three youths in the fiery furnace, who therein called upon the heavens and the sun and the stars and all creatures under the sun, insensate though they were, to assist them in singing the praises of God. Let our hearts then break forth in sweet songs of thanksgiving and with the willing tongues of all God's creatures celebrate in heavenly canticles the inexhaustible sweetness of the Lord. Let us not pour ourselves out on things external, but with zealous care keep alive within us the ardor of divine love, and enjoy to the full that familiar converse with God, in which our own wants must not be forgotten. Then, too, each day's Sacrifice should be a preparation for the one on the morrow, that it may make us richer in God's good gifts; else the fair flower of God's precious grace, unheeded and uncared for, will weaken and wither in our souls.

Though what has been said applies to all priests in general, who, dwellers on earth, perform the ministry of heaven, as St. John Chrysostom says so beautifully, yet to us in particular do all these remarks apply with peculiar force; for much has been bestowed upon us, and from us, therefore, much will be expected. A divine hand has led us to the religious life and hedged us round about with the firm knowledge of our sublime vocation and thus has separated us from the outer world. He pours His graces into our hearts in our frequent meditations and adds a loving increase during the most holy Sacrifice of the altar. By all these helps, besides those special incentives to win His love, we seem to have been raised by God to the sublime dignity of making reparation to His Majesty for the carelessness, irreverence, yes, and sinfulness of the many who approach and administer this divine mystery of love. Not to mention the thoughts of St. John Chrysostom and many other holy Fathers, St. Laurence Justinian describes with saddening accuracy the state of these men and deplores their miserable lot with religious sorrow.

But to end my letter, I beseech the Lord God to pour His graces upon you all, that with His assistance you may reap an



abundant harvest from this barren exhortation of mine. Especially do I enjoin upon Superiors and Confessors and Spiritual Fathers to labor strenuously for the promotion of this consoling devotion to God immolated on our altars. Let them remove all obstacles and supply all helps to the furthering of this devotion, and with careful judgment let them explain the difficulties which surround it. But most of all do I lovingly beg of them to imitate the silent God of sacrifice and teach their subjects this devotion more by example than by word.

I beg a remembrance in the prayers and Holy Sacrifices of all.

Your Servant in Christ,

CLAUDE ACQUAVIVA.

*Rome,*

*November 24, 1612.*

## VIII.

A LETTER OF VERY REVEREND FATHER MUTIUS VITELLESCHI  
ON THE CENTENARY OF THE SOCIETY.

The year on which we are now entering should be one of gladness for us and rich with consolation, for it marks the close of a hundred years since the birth and foundation of our Order. It would be a great happiness for me to meet you all at this time in person, and by my presence wish you joy ; but since this may not be, I greet you all in spirit and holy love, and, as no better way is left me to reach you, I send you a letter,—one of those letters which Saint Ignatius the Martyr was fond of calling “ kindly ports,” because they still keep up sweet intercourse and interchange of thought with those who are far away. I come then in spirit to you all, and tenderly embrace each one of you, dear Fathers and Brothers, whom, after the Apostle, I will call my own bowels in the bowels of Jesus Christ. With every mark of love I offer my congratulations to the whole Society, over which our common Lord long since willed to set me as his servant, though most unworthy of so high a charge. The Divine Goodness has deigned to fill my heart with a holy gladness in this our hour of joy, and I invite you all to share with me these emotions, while we recall together the sweet remembrance of the great blessings which our loving Lord and Father has bestowed on us during all these years with bounteous and unfailing hand. For all these favors we should be deeply grateful ; and, surely, it would be but a poor return to make, were we to stop with mere words and protestations of gratitude. We must do more. We must show renewed ardor and earnest endeavor in the service of so good a Master, and must strive for the future, as far as our weakness allows, to merit in every way his kind protection.

After consultation with the Fathers Assistants, I have judged it well to accede to the wish of the Provinces in their earnest petition

that this year might not be allowed to pass without some solemn and public recognition ; and I have made known my decision in a letter which I wrote recently to the Houses of the Society. In granting this petition I have been influenced by the hope that in this way we might best acquire those graces of which we stand in need, but still more by the thought that thus we should incur fresh obligations, and be forced, as it were, to recognize that before God and man we are now bound by new pledges and that our lives should show perfection and sanctity corresponding to the graces for which with so much solemnity we give thanks to God. Then, too, external pomp and ceremony are wont to leave a deep impression on the soul and help us to reflect, and we go forth quickened in spirit and with the strong purpose to show in our lives those virtues of which this fleeting and evanescent splendor is but the faintest image.

This was the purpose God had in view when He established a jubilee year to be kept by the Jews at certain fixed periods, for He knew it would tend to the welfare and preservation of His people. He had led that people out of Egypt and had brought them to the promised land, and it was His wish that they should never lose possession of the portion that had been given them. He ordained that these possessions should remain fixed to the family, and that each family should transmit to its last descendants its ancient heritage and honor. For this reason He forbade them by law to alienate their goods. If, however, anyone through need or change of fortune, had lost any part of his possessions, a year was fixed in recurring periods, in which all that was sold should revert to the ancient possessor, who was thenceforth to be the owner of these goods as though he had never sold them.

It seems to me, dear Fathers and Brothers, that I hear our Lord calling on St. Ignatius at this time in the very words which He spoke of old to Moses : "Thou shalt sound the trumpet in the seventh month . . . in all your land. And thou shalt sanctify the fiftieth year, and shall proclaim remission to all the inhabitants of



the land : for it is the year of jubilee." <sup>(1)</sup> Surely, it has happened not without the kind disposition of divine Providence and the guidance of St. Ignatius, that the solemn proclamation of this year of grace has come precisely in the seventh month. But that this year may be for us one of jubilee, a glad, holy year, learn from our Lord's words what must be done : "Every man shall return to his possession, and everyone shall go back to his former family ; because it is the jubilee." <sup>(2)</sup> If through any misfortune or fault of Ours aught of the world's dust has clung to us during these hundred years ; if any portion of this land of saints, which belongs wholly to Jesus Christ and is not ours to barter, has passed from us into the hands of strangers ; or if, perchance, the bustle of the world or continual intercourse with men has made us, I will not say, slaves,—for by the mercy of God I cannot say it, or even fear it ; but if this commerce has in the least weakened our hearts or bound our affections to the world, then, "every man shall return to his possession, and everyone shall go back to his former family : because it is the jubilee." Let us reclaim what is ours. Let us regain that heritage left us by our first Fathers ; that poverty which found its joy and wealth in being stript of all things ; that purity which it is enough to call angelic ; that obedience ever prompt and docile, ever ready to act at the mere sign of the Superior's will. Finally, let us bring back those older virtues and the sanctity of our first ten Fathers—that early blessed family—who though few in numbers were mighty as a whole people, and by their holy zeal did the work of a century in a few short years.

I know that by the kind favor of heaven, our Society may be said to be what Isaias calls, an infant of a hundred years. But in this other and holier sense, that the Society has kept herself all these hundred years, like a tender child, innocent and free from stain ; that she is more solicitous now than ever to cherish that holy innocence, and still finds her delight in that early milk of piety and virtue, which she drank in at the chaste breast of that Mother of Virgins, who gave birth to the Society and fostered our

<sup>(1)</sup> Levit. xxv. 9, 10.

<sup>(2)</sup> Levit. xxv. 10, 11.

Order in its youth. If, however, by any untoward event or approach of age, the Society should seem to languish or give token of decay in any part of her body, of which we are the members, I earnestly entreat that they who feel this touch of time, will leave nothing undone that the Society may still deserve to be called an infant of a hundred years, in the sense which St. Jerome attaches to that word. This holy Doctor applies this title to Christ, who in the person of Isaac, the figure of Christ, was begotten of Abraham when he was a hundred years old. I fondly trust that, at the end of this century which we are now bringing to a close, it may be our consolation to hear from the lips of our holy Father St. Ignatius those sweet words: "My little children of whom I am in labor again, until Christ be formed in you." <sup>(3)</sup> May we, "as new-born babes," be regenerated unto a new life in Christ, quickened in spirit, that thus Christ may live anew in us and fashion us wholly unto Himself, by the imitation of his life, that is, by the careful and perfect observance of our rules. Thus renewed in spirit, with fresh growth in strength and courage, glowing with life and eager to run in the way, we shall enter on a second century of sanctity, never resting till we arrive unto the state of "a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ" <sup>(4)</sup>

Our Society has always been conspicuous for this vigor and manly strength-traits that must ever go with the simple candor of the child. While our Order was yet new-born, and still "a sucking child, it played on the hole of the asp;" <sup>(5)</sup> and later, not content with fostering that first excellence, it grew with years in strength and every noble virtue.

The words of Caleb to his leader should stir us to a deep appreciation of the gratitude we owe to the goodness of God. For the Society can say to Jesus Christ, her Leader, as truly as Caleb boasted to Josue of old: "This day I am a hundred years old, as strong as I was at that time when I was sent to view the land; the strength of that time continueth in me until this day, as well to fight as to

<sup>(3)</sup> Gal. iv. 19.

<sup>(4)</sup> Eph. iv. 13.

<sup>(5)</sup> Isa. xi. 8.

march.”<sup>(6)</sup> Well may we say that the Society has felt the kind hand of God’s favor and mercy. She sprang into being under the protection of heaven, and through that same protection she has been preserved until this hour in that early bloom and vigor in which she gloried, when she was first sent into the world to examine the land, and see how she might bring it subject to God and His holy law. Even in our day, we see amid our ranks, to our great glory and the good of souls, countless valiant comrades, whose burning zeal and heroic strength bear testimony that the Society is still mighty, and that we have not fallen from the proud position of our ancestors, either in open battle against the hidden foe or the declared enemies of God, or in the line of march along the royal road of virtue and religious perfection. How, forsooth, could old age bring decay to her, or wrinkle mark her brow; for even from the hour of her birth she was “nurtured in the bosom of the Father,” to use the expression which Clement of Alexandria applies to Christ, finding there sweet nourishment and the unfailing source of every virtue, drawing thence that perfect life which men admire in her, and the rule of all her conduct. Surely, there is in this sweet cause of joy an incentive to new efforts, if we at all love the Society as a mother, in whom and by whom we have been brought forth unto a new life and fashioned in Christ Jesus.

Oh, what a disgrace it would be, if at a time when the Society is in her flower and strength, there should be found any amongst us so weak and void of spirit, as to be unable out of sheer exhaustion, —I will not say, to undertake great works, but even—to stand unmoved! What a strange thing it would be to see children old and wasted, while their mother was young and active! It would be a monstrosity and the scorn of all the world! Intelligent men would say that children of this kind belie their name when they claim to be the offspring of such a mother; they would count them as “strangers” rather, as the royal Prophet says so well: “The children that are strangers have lied to me, strange children have faded away, and have halted from their paths.”<sup>(7)</sup> And evil-

<sup>(6)</sup> Josue xiv. 10, 11.<sup>(7)</sup> Ps. xvii. 46.



minded men and those who are ill disposed towards our Society will take occasion from the weakness and decrepitude of the children to accuse the mother of craft, and show that she is really sterile, though in her cunning she hides her exhausted age and makes pretense to youth and hearty vigor. Should there be any amongst us who forget their vocation, and God grant there may never be, see what discredit they would bring on the Society, by wandering from the royal road of our holy rules and, under the very eyes of men, whose gaze we can never shun, living after the spirit and the manner of the world. It matters not that these unworthy children live in the company of brethren, who walk as true Religious in the spirit of God ; for though the brightness of the virtues of others shines round about them, the stain of their lives still remains. This only proves the truth of what St. Jerome once said about a fervent community of virgins : " It is enough that a few do not live as they should, to bring dishonor on the holy life of others, and stain the honor of an angelic home." The ways of bad religious cast opprobrium on the lives of their worthy brethren, or at least tarnish by their disorders the fair name that others have won by their virtues. It is as the Apostle says, " a little leaven corrupteth the whole mass." <sup>(8)</sup> We know it takes but a few gray hairs to dim the lustre of locks that were once black and glossy. And following the example of St. Gregory and other Fathers, we may liken the Society to the resplendent locks that grace the head of our leader Jesus Christ, of Whom the Holy Ghost, in his wisdom, has said : " His locks are black as a raven ;" <sup>(9)</sup> desiring by this color to indicate the perfection of manhood, and the presence of youthful vigor and heroic strength. Lastly, we may apply to ourselves what Salvian said so well in speaking on another subject : " The Church," he says (and we may say the same of the Society), " may be compared to the eye. If but a little dust enters the eye, it blinds the sight, and light is lost in darkness ; so, too, in the Church, if even a few lead ungodly lives, it is quite enough to mar the glory and splendor of the whole body."

<sup>(8)</sup> I. Cor. v. 6.

<sup>(9)</sup> Cant. v. 11.

I confess, dear Fathers and Brothers, this thought discomforts me and gives me pain, as I have no doubt it does all those who have any love for so good and worthy a mother. It is sad to think that the whole Society must be held accountable for the doings of its individual members ; and I grieve the more over this, because, as I have said elsewhere, it has been our lot all along to be judged in this way. Is it a blessing for us, or a curse, that men should judge us thus ? I shall not take it upon myself to decide ; but this much is certain, it must prove a serious evil for us, unless it brings with it, also, this good result and happy issue, that it force us to be more on our guard, and spur us on to better things.

Such is the opinion men have formed of us, that on account of that unity of purpose which they see, or fancy they see, in us, they impute to all the defects of a few, and condemn the whole body for the faults of individual members. What can be more deplorable ? And yet what should make us more solicitous, or more untiring in our endeavors to lead holy lives, free from all reproach ? Can it be true that I alone am to blame for such sad words as these : The Society of Jesus has lost that angelic modesty which was her special charm among all the religious bodies ; the Jesuits no longer have that same zeal for souls ; they have lost those traits for which their works once found favor with all : that humility, gravity, and saintliness ; in fine, the Society has fallen from its olden state, and is no longer what it once was ? Yes, all this may easily happen. Do we not know that our enemies are only too eager to take up these complaints and spread them against us ? " In other communities," says St. Gregory Nazianzen, " all are not judged at once to be black, because there are some found of that color ; nor are all deemed ignoble, or depraved, or slothful, or intemperate, or lustful, because there are many such. Each one is judged by himself and by his own deeds ; and the measure of praise or blame which falls to each is not attributed to all alike. Here, on the contrary, and one would think he was speaking of the Society, the sins of one are straightway imputed to all ; and on account of the faults of many, or even of a few, the whole order is brought

into disgrace and opprobrium. But what is worse still, the harm does not stop here, but reaches farther, and discredit is brought on our holy and venerated religion. Among those who pass criticism on us, there are a few who will be somewhat lenient and moderate, but many will push their bitterness and hatred to the extreme. Some will reproach us for our defects, yet in doing so will free our holy faith from all blame ; but others will cast the blame on the law itself as being the teacher of evil."

I have said that it is the peculiar misfortune of the Society, that the sayings and doings of the individual are ascribed to the body ; for it is clearly a sad thing, and very strange, that the reputation of so many good men should be made to depend on the infidelity of a few who do not live up to their rule. We must not be distressed if at times some are sent from our midst, for, as St. Augustine remarks, it is not to be wondered at, when we consider that we are very numerous, and that after all, the Order to which we belong, is made up of men, not angels. We ought rather to take great consolation in the thought of the many who are an ornament to the Society. It is not right to condemn the presses that fill the store-house of the Lord with purest oil, for the few impurities that may be refined away.

I added, too, that that which is our misfortune, is also our gain ; for it serves as a holy stimulus to spur us on, and incite us to live and act as though each of us were sustaining alone the reputation of our brethren, the honor and fair name of our mother the Society, and the glory of our king and leader, Jesus Christ.

This consideration inspires me with holy hope and with an ardent desire to see you put to profit an occasion such as this, the approach of a new century. We ought all of us to enter into ourselves and reflect seriously at this time. In the first place, we ought to examine closely all our actions, weighing them well ; correcting what is wrong, making the rule our guide in everything, shaping every act by the grand models that have been left us, always keeping our high purpose in view, and ever looking to it that the splendid reputation of the Society suffer no harm at our hands.



Whatever be our work in the future, let us excite ourselves to noble effort by the thought, that it is not so much we who act, as the Society through us, repeating often and fixing in our minds that saying of St. Augustine to Aprignus : " When you act, it is ' the Society ' that acts ; it is for her you act, as her child." The remembrance of this should make us fear the criticisms of men, but much more the judgment of God, Who often chastises a whole people for the sin of one. You know what happened when Achan transgressed the command, which the Lord had given to the Jewish soldiers through their leader Josue, after their splendid victory, that no man should lay hand on the spoils of the enemy. Achan alone sinned, yet all were held as guilty : " Israel hath sinned and transgressed the covenant."<sup>(10)</sup> Thereupon, the Lord was angry against the children of Israel, and visited the crime of one on the whole people ; his wrath was kindled against them and there was dreadful slaughter ; " and the heart of the people was struck with fear and melted like water ; but Josue rent his garments, and fell flat on the ground before the ark of the Lord until the evening."<sup>(11)</sup> As Salvian remarks very justly on this passage : " the crime of one man became the scourge of all." Fierce tempests sometimes burst upon the Society from unseen clouds and causes quite unknown. Fear comes upon us, and in our distress, we bow down our heads and fall to earth upon our knees, while in spirit we lie prostrate in humble supplication before the ark of the New Testament, Christ Jesus, Who is in heaven. And who can say but that in such an hour the sin of one has become the scourge of all ? We may well believe it so, even though our faults are not great ones nor our sins foul ; for often a slight fault is enough, especially if it be joined with great ingratitude, to arouse the justice of God and kindle his wrath against all. Thus David alone incurred guilt, in causing the people to be numbered. In the ways of men this would be deemed a trifling fault ; but before God, the whole people had to expiate that sin. I would fain think that it is not so with us. I like to believe that these storms which fall on the Society are not

<sup>(10)</sup> Josue vii. 11.<sup>(11)</sup> Jos. vii. 5, 6.

stirred up by any fault of ours, but that they come through the singular love of a most tender Father, rebuking the negligence of his sons "in judgment,"<sup>(12)</sup> "not in wrath."<sup>(13)</sup> But charity is full of anxious fear, and pictures to itself the evils that might happen, though they never come to pass; and this holy fear should be ever present to those who have the interests of the Society at heart. It should be as a goad to prick them on to stricter observance of rule, and keep them always watchful, lest at any time they fall into a fault, for which the Society, that best and dearest of mothers, might be forced to atone and suffer cruel pain.

There is another matter on which we should examine ourselves with no little care. Have we allowed the fire of love to grow dim in any way? Does the spirit with which we once burned, still glow within us, in brightness not unlike that with which the Society shone in the beginning? Let us look to it; and if we chance to discover that this fire languishes in us, let us hasten to revive it, and make it glow with its former brightness. We must needs confess that the spirit can grow dull only too easily; for who is there that does not feel himself weighed down from time to time with heaviness of heart, while wandering here in this body of death. "The corruptible body is a load upon the soul,"<sup>(14)</sup> and St. Augustine says: "The soul has its abode in a corruptible body—and what manner of life does it lead there? Why, it is sorely afflicted and groans under heavy burdens. We find it hard to think of God, as it behooves us to do! How many difficulties, arising from the needs of our human lot, stand in the way and keep us back! How many lowly desires turn the soul from sublime thoughts! On all sides it is encompassed by allurements and suggestions of every kind. "Is there not in this much to weaken the soul and lead it insensibly into a state of languor? Too often, indeed, we have experienced it; and many a time we have found ourselves without strength or courage, and felt the need of that counsel of David: "Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's."<sup>(15)</sup> St. Augustine tells us that when this king of birds begins to grow old, a hard

<sup>(12)</sup> Jer. ii. 9.<sup>(13)</sup> Ps. vi. 1.<sup>(14)</sup> Wisd. ix. 15.<sup>(15)</sup> Ps. cii. 5.

skin forms on the top of its beak, which so firmly joins the upper part to the lower, that it becomes impossible for the bird to open its bill or take any food ; then the torpor of age comes on, and the bird languishes from sheer hunger. But, the saint adds, nature has taught the eagle how to remedy its lot, for the bird in this distress rubs its beak against a rock, till the callous growth that threatened death is worn away and the bill is once more free ; “ then it hastens to eat, and strength returns, and life and all the olden wealth of plumage ; once again, as before, it soars aloft, and wings its proud course through the heights of heaven. The eagle has been renewed from age to youth again.” I do not pretend to say that all this is true ; I merely accept it on the testimony of those writers from whom St. Augustine took it. It is enough for me that it illustrates what I wish to say ; for in like manner, either through decay of time or want of care, there gathers over the mouth of the heart, if I may so speak, a certain growth of earthly desires and passions, which so firmly binds its lips, that it cannot open to heavenly food or receive divine nourishment. The royal Prophet deplores this misfortune under another figure : “ I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered,” <sup>(16)</sup> that is, languor and old age have come upon the heart, and why ? “ because,” he says, “ I forgot to eat my bread.” But why has he ceased to eat his bread ? and why is it difficult ? Because, he adds, “ my bone hath cleaved to my flesh.” The heart can no longer partake of heavenly things, for its mouth has been sealed ; a hard growth has formed about its lips, brought on by self-indulgence. What think you, is the cause of this disgust we feel for spiritual things ? Why does it become so painful a task for us to fix our mind on God and repress those thoughts of ours, which often wander whither we would not ? It is because we did not hold them in check, when it was in our power ? Whence this strong and alluring love of earthly things, of the world, of honors, of parents and our own comfort ? And that I may insist on facts more than words—why is it that flesh and blood so rule over the spirit in us ? Why is this warfare with our

(16) Ps. ci. 5.



internal enemy so futile and so helpless? True, we have not suffered total defeat, but we are far from that generosity and loftiness of spirit to which alone is due the honor of victory. Our weakness is the fruit of inconstant virtue. It comes of a languid spirit, and unless that spirit is aroused and strengthened in time, it is sure to fall and perish.

But where shall we find a remedy for these disorders? St. Augustine shows us in these words: "the hard rock will rid you of old age, and the rock is Christ; your youth like the eagle's will be renewed in Christ." Age has crept upon you; the heart can no longer partake of heavenly food, for its lips are sealed; the callous growth that binds them must be worn away upon the rock, on that mysterious rock which of old, when struck with the rod, poured forth those waters that gave life to all around. While our heart thirsts, why do we not press our parched lips against this rock? And why do we not, along with the pure and wholesome air which we need, drink in the waters of life as they flow from the rock, that they may moisten and enrich our soul? "The grass will grow green again," watered by the Saviour's blood, says St. Augustine in another place. And the Saint's words are very true; for assiduous meditation on the sufferings of Christ in His passion and death, breaks our earthly affections upon the rock, and wears away those carnal growths, which so develop with time, that they quite close our lips to their proper food, and keep the soul from seeking God and exclaiming with the Prophet: "I opened my mouth and panted." (17)

I greatly desire that we should have recourse to prayer as the chief help offered us for renewal of spirit. And first we must repair whatever defects have crept into the practice of this holy exercise. So men are wont to do, when they try to revive and bring back to its former perfection an art that is well-nigh lost. They begin by preparing a workshop and fitting it up with tools and whatever is needed for their work. And surely we must know that prayer is the only workshop, where we may repair the soul

(17) Ps. 118,

and make it bright by the fire of divine love and free from the rust of spiritual decay. The inspired Psalmist exclaims: "in my meditation the fire shall burst forth;" that is to say, in meditation a flame of great virtue, intense and active, will spring forth, imparting life and warmth to the soul, till it glows with vitality and burns with its love of God.

Our holy Father Ignatius has built for us a wondrous workshop, fully equipped and furnished with most perfect instruments. If through any neglect, we have allowed these tools to rust and become unfit for use, let us hasten to repair them and make them bright again by the help of the Spiritual Exercises. And here let me exhort you, with all the earnestness I can, to the use of these Exercises, begging and entreating you to give yourselves seriously to them, that you may thereby acquire that greatness of soul and courage so necessary to the practice of prayer. Prayer is the greatest of all arts, and we should cultivate it all our lives; for it will be of great avail to us not only in regaining our youth and strength, but also in keeping far from us for the future the approach of spiritual old age.

This is the remedy offered us against the danger of spiritual decay, and without it all other helps will be in vain. I am aware that this is no new remedy. It is an old one and well known to you. Still, circumstances will endow it with new virtue and give it fresh power to heal. The Society in our day abounds in spiritual helps of every sort; for not to speak of our Constitutions and Rules, which, to my mind, contain a rich store of choice remedies against every kind of disorder, we have besides in our Admonitions, Ordinations, and Instructions so many safe and salutary methods of cure for all cases and occasions that may arise, that to order new remedies and give fresh prescriptions would not be to cure the sick nor preserve the health of those who are well, but would tend rather to afflict the strong and oppress those who are ill. However, there is one thing I desire very much, and I recommend it as forcibly and urgently as I can, trusting that what I say will impress itself so deeply on your minds, that nothing

may ever be able to efface it, and that, as often as opportunity offers, it will show itself in all you do. What I desire is the exact keeping of our Rules and the efficient application of the remedies which we possess, for in this way alone shall the Society continue in the unfading bloom of youth, not merely for a hundred years, but for all time. Listen to the beautiful words of St. Augustine : "What ! shall He not cure you, Who so made you that you would never have been sick, had you but willed to keep the rule He gave you, on which your health depended ? Did He not determine and ordain what you were to touch and what you were to leave untouched, for the preservation of your health ? You did not wish to listen that your health might be spared, hearken that you may be healed, for you have learned in your affliction the truth of his words." It is a sad experience that which is acquired at the cost of a fall, still we may draw profit from it. Let us at least, taught by experience, follow the advice we refused at first to receive.

We see from this how necessary it is to insist on carrying out what is prescribed. Inferiors who seek to be cured, must use the remedies and undergo the treatment prescribed for them ; and superiors, on their part, are bound in a special way to prescribe for their patients, and exact an account of their condition and their improvement under these remedies. The spiritual health and strength of inferiors rest to a great extent on the watchfulness of superiors ; and we know that, in general, the government of our Houses and Colleges depends much on the Rectors who are placed over them. Observance of rule, discipline and order will be such as the Superior makes them, either lax or strict. The saying of St. Gregory Nazianzen is most true, that "as works bespeak the workman's skill, so the lives of subjects reveal the hand that rules them." I must acknowledge "my ears tingle,"<sup>(18)</sup> as often as the words of St. Leo recur to me : "The faults of subjects are to be referred to none more than to slothful and careless rulers, who frequently foster sore pestilence, while they refrain from applying the needed medicine." And the holier the obligations are by which

(18) I King, iii. 11.



superiors are bound to demand discipline from their subjects, the greater cause they have to fear, if they are negligent ; for God has implanted a spirit of reverence and docility in subjects towards those who are placed over them, and it can scarcely be told how much harm those superiors do the service of God, who perform their work remissly. For as in the beginning "the Lord set a mark on Cain" in token of punishment, that whosoever found him should not kill him ; so, in like manner, to signify his approval, He has marked out superiors for special veneration. He has set his seal upon them, and has adorned them with every sign of honor and authority, that subjects might deem it an unholy thing to resist them. It was this "token for good" <sup>(19)</sup> that David prayed to be adorned with, when about to crush his enemies at the command of God. Superiors should ever keep before their eyes that beautiful, though awful saying of St. Gregory, that before the dread tribunal of the Last Judgment, subjects will have to give an account of only one soul, while superiors must answer for many : "Therefore, let the superior, who is scarcely able to satisfy a stern judge for his own soul, ponder this well, for in the hour of judgment, he will be the only one who will have as many souls to answer for as he had subjects to rule over."

Indeed, I believe that, by the favor of God, the superiors in our Society show great good will and prompt zeal in the discharge of their office ; that they are most careful to insist on the carrying out of all that is prescribed for the fostering and perfecting of religious life among us, and that they leave nothing undone to effect this. Still as we are men, and subject to human frailty, it often happens, almost without our knowing it, that the rust of earthly desires secretly forms upon the soul and eats away its strength, or some bias of mind turns us a little from the straight way, and keeps us back in our progress towards God.

I will touch on a few of these points in passing. There is one defect which is very common among us and quite widespread. It is the imprudent desire we have of helping all to the gaining of

(19) Ps. lxxxv. 17.

perfection by the use of the same means. I know this defect springs from charity, but from an ill-regulated charity ; for we do not stop to think whether our subjects will be helped or not by what we do for them, or whether our zeal for the assistance of one will bring harm to many. Hence it happens that Rectors relax in governing and pass over many things in silence, to the great detriment of discipline, deceived by this false reason, that in undertaking to administer necessary correction, their attempt may end unhappily, and tend to break the delinquent's spirit rather than lead him back to the right way. And, meantime, they do not sufficiently reflect that thus they are doing a great injury to the whole community, while they fail utterly to do the individual any good. This, surely, is not the way to help souls to sanctity, or keep them in their vocation, to grant them full license to walk at their own pleasure or neglect what they see fit. No man thinks of holding in an unmanageable horse by dropping the reins and allowing him to rush at pleasure over unbidden paths, whithersoever impulse and wild caprice take him ; but he uses the reins as occasion demands, now he gives a loose rein, again a tight one, and with pressing bit and the whip teaches the animal to obey and thus curbs his unruly spirit. That good Samaritan of whom we read in the gospel, so admirable in his piety and kindly charity, is a model for superiors who would rule well. He healed the fallen and half-lifeless man by binding, not opening, his gaping wounds ; "he bound up his wounds," the gospel tells us.<sup>(20)</sup> Whereupon St. Ambrose remarks wisely, as is his wont, "he binds the wounds by a more stringent precept." I do not, however, wish to be understood as though it were never right to show indulgence to a subject or overlook faults at times ; for I know there are occasions when this may be even necessary, not for mere passing motives, but in the hope of a real, substantial gain to God's glory. Still I maintain that we should act in this way very cautiously ; and we should be ever on the alert, avoiding anything that might lead to harm in the community, and shunning even the least danger of

<sup>(20)</sup> Luke x. 34.

hurtful example. In general, let us cherish that excellent maxim and solid counsel of St. Augustine : " Let forbearance be watchful that discipline may never fall asleep." Holy Job praises the harmony of the heavens, because it is perpetual, unbroken, without rest or interval : " who can make the harmony of heaven to sleep?"<sup>(21)</sup> Our houses and colleges should be like the heavens in this, offering up to God one unbroken chorus of sweet harmony.

There is another defect, akin to this, which quite impedes good government. It comes from making too much of that maxim : " Do nothing to estrange your subjects from you or displease them." Now this would be all very well and quite proper, if there were question only of ruling over angelic hosts. But that it may be applied as a rule of conduct for men who have to govern their fellow-men, it is not enough that their subjects live by the spirit, they should also be pure spirits and without the burden of flesh. There is a sense, however, in which this saying may be received with approval, in so far as it inculcates a spirit of paternal love and kindly disposition in superiors, and insists that they should seek real peace for their subjects and never give them true cause for pain. Still, they should always observe moderation in this and when there is need, and the service of God requires it, they should insist firmly on the accomplishment of God's will, and fearlessly go the full length of their duty, as far as occasion demands, even though it bring grief to some and stir up loud complaints. For we know that kind fathers are often forced to give pain to the sons they love, insisting and urging and chiding, when the welfare and happiness of the family demand it. St. Gregory in speaking on this subject, says that a superior should be at once a father and a mother, and in the end concludes with this remark : " A Rector should be as a mother to his subjects by his kindness and affection, but discipline should show him as a father." Superiors are often afraid to exercise their authority, even in the spirit of charity, or demand the performance of duties that belong to the religious life, lest they do harm to their subjects or cause them

<sup>(21)</sup> Job xxxviii. 37.



disquiet. But in this their fear is foolish and quite out of place, and there is much more reason to fear lest thereby they give just cause of offence to inferiors, because they seem to trust so little in their virtue and loyalty. We must remember that we have to do with men, who have given themselves freely and of their own accord to God, and gladly bear the yoke of Christ. They know by experience that that yoke is light, for He has made it so Who deigned to bear it first for our sakes and make trial of it in His own person, causing "the yoke to putrefy at the presence of the oil;"<sup>(22)</sup> and though sometimes they feel that this yoke weighs heavily on them, and is a pain and burden to our weak, fickle nature, still they bear it willingly, and patiently suffer it, strengthened by the words of St. Augustine, who says that the yoke of discipline "is not the burden of one who is oppressed, but the wing of one about to fly." Thus, like birds of Paradise, our brethren will not count their wings as a burden, albeit they are heavy, for, though they must needs bear them while at rest on earth, they are borne up by them in their flight to heaven. Let the members of the Society hear the voice of the superior with pleasure as the voice of God, exhorting them under the burden of the rule and strengthening them with the words: "Bear the wings of peace, receive the wings of charity."

The third defect in good government may be said to arise from that special liking which superiors have for some members of their community; for in their desire to be indulgent to their friends without open show of favor, they fancy it will be best not to be over-strict with the community, and so make up their mind to be liberal in their interpretation of many things, and overlook a great deal. And if some boldly disregard even this too human course of conduct, and make no attempt to appear impartial towards all, it is clear that any effort on their part to exact religious observance from some, while they are indulgent to others who are equally bound by the rule, will be utterly fruitless and without any good result. Hence superiors will find it a great help in the fulfilment

<sup>(22)</sup> Isa. x. 27.

of their office to look only to the merits and works, and not to the person of their subjects ; for in this way they will find it easy to obtain from all alike, even with great kindness, the practice of common discipline. It was not without some mysterious purpose that the Patriarch Isaac was deprived of sight in the day when he was to bestow his solemn blessing upon his two sons. If he had been able to look upon his sons and distinguish them, there would have been danger lest he might make more of the promptings of his own heart than of God's appointment, and he might have put his fond love for Esau before the merits of Jacob. Surely, he who is father of all ought not to devote to any one of his children the whole heart of love that belongs to all ; nor should he give his right hand to one, and his left hand to the others ; but as far as is possible he should show himself equally kind and well-disposed to all, knowing no distinction but that which God makes. His one thought should be to act by those words of our Lord : " to sit on my right hand or left hand, is not mine to give you, but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father." <sup>(23)</sup>

But if special affection for others can so keep superiors from their duty in exacting discipline, how much harm will be done when superiors are influenced by motives of self-love, and are at the same time over-eager to seek their own reputation and convenience ? This spirit is subtle, and in its slow progress, secretly attacks the very life of religious government, robs it of vigor, till at last exhausted it falls without energy or strength. How is it possible for a superior in this state of things to rule his subjects with freedom and sweetness, or bid them in the words of the Gospel : " pay what thou owest." <sup>(24)</sup> But this self-love leads to something still more hurtful ; for it insinuates itself into the mind and keeps it from that vigilance and care, which are so essential to the welfare of the community, or at least makes it blind, so that we come to form different judgments on the same matters according as they have to do with ourselves or others. When this happens, great harm is done, and we rule no longer with holy wisdom. Surely

(23) Matt. xx. 23.

(24) Matt. xviii. 28.

here, if anywhere, the saying of St. Gregory is in place: "self-love quite blinds our heart; and it happens thereupon, that what we do ourselves, and deem quite proper, appears most unseemly in our eyes when done by another." How, indeed, can he who is thus blinded, enforce the Rule upon others without feeling shame, seeing that he does not hold himself bound by the same obligations. And this especially in the Society, where, thank God, the opinion has ever prevailed that superiors should lead the rest of the community in the keeping of the Rules and in every duty of the religious life; who should excel others in this only, that they bear a double burden upon their shoulders, and promote religious perfection in the community, while they themselves advance in holiness imitating in this the Beloved in the Canticles, who when about to bring his spouse into the mountain of myrrh, the abode of bitterness and grief, did not give any command other than announce to her, "I will go to the mountain of myrrh."<sup>(25)</sup> To be brief there is nothing that exercises such influence on religious men as the force of example. It is stronger than any word or command. Knowing this, our Divine Guide, ever so perfectly obedient to His Father's will, nay, for that very reason called "the arm of the Lord,"<sup>(26)</sup> that He might bring us to do God's will, "began to do and to teach,"<sup>(27)</sup> as if He considered this His real work, in place of giving laws. And since He was to teach men to be humble, to despise themselves, to love poverty, and bear affliction, it is not to be wondered at that He wished to appear vile, poor, despised and weighed down with afflictions, thereby clearly showing superiors how victory over self-love will make them "mighty in work and word"<sup>(28)</sup> before their subjects.

The last thing that seems to hinder those who are in authority from the proper discharge of their duty, is an over-great anxiety and solicitude about daily needs and temporal concerns. These cares are frequently a source of distraction, bringing weariness of mind and body, and oftentimes they keep us away from our community, and thus we neglect our real business, which is the guid-

<sup>(25)</sup> Cant. iv.<sup>(26)</sup> Isa. liii. 1.<sup>(27)</sup> Acts i. 1.<sup>(28)</sup> Luke xxiv. 19.



ance of our brethren in the way of virtue and perfection. And all the while superiors little reflect that they are neglecting the only real means of relief in all their wants; for there is no surer way to secure help and provide for the future, than by showing a watchful care for our Rules and Institute, and demanding of all the faithful observances of Rules, holy examples, and zeal for our neighbor's salvation. This, indeed, is the best provision we can make, and it will prove a rich and unfailing source of revenue to our colleges. Speaking on this matter, there comes to mind a remark made by our Holy Father St. Ignatius while he was here at Rome. It seems that while in recreation on one occasion, the conversation turned on the famine from which Rome was then suffering. One of the fathers said it seemed to him a miracle, that at such a time our house, which had nothing to live on save what it got by alms, should want for nothing, while others were in such distress. "Do you look on it as a miracle?" asked the saint very gravely and in a tone of rebuke. "Nay, rather, we should consider it a miracle if it were to happen otherwise; for if we but work faithfully in the divine service, seeking first our own perfection, and after that our neighbor's, God will not be wanting on His part, nor will He forget His plighted promises ever to have a care of us."

It may be owing perhaps to these defects, and others like them, which might be enumerated here, that some of our superiors find themselves unable to obtain from those who have been entrusted to their care, that observance of rule and perfection of discipline which they desire. The defects of which we have spoken are very hurtful to a superior; for like worms hidden in the heart of a tree, they secretly prey upon their victim and eat his strength away. And though he may be well disposed and quite intent on caring for the Rules, still he will fail in his purpose, and fall among those, who, as the Prophet Isaias says, "are come to birth, and there is not strength to bring forth."<sup>(29)</sup> He is not lacking in zeal for holiness in his community. He is distressed over the faults and failings

<sup>(29)</sup> xxxvii. 3.

of those under him, and his heart is racked with pain when his subjects fall. And many a time he repeats the words of Blessed Cyprian : " I, too, am smitten in my members by the darts of a cruel enemy ; their deadly swords pierce me through, and compassion hath laid me prostrate among my fallen brethren." They cry out that all is not well ; they lift up their voice and complain to those who should hear, as is quite right and proper ; but often, too, they do what they should not, and make lament before those who ought not to hear—and the result is just what St. Augustine complained of in a similar matter, " that the strong are needlessly pained, and the weak are alarmed at their peril." But why say more ! " They are come to the birth," they have all the feelings, premonitions, pains, and anguish of one about to bring forth grand reforms in religious life. Help is offered by those whose place it is to do so, treatments are prescribed and methods proposed, still " there is not strength to bring forth ;" the work proves to be abortive from sheer weakness and after all our efforts we accomplish nothing.

I know that what I have said may not be altogether called for, as I am addressing men who have followed these principles all along in practice, or at least have understood them quite well. But at the same time, I feel that I speak as one under heavenly inspiration and with the high purpose of effecting a great increase of virtue among us. Hence the knowledge of the happy results of good government, and the responsibility of my position, which forces me ever to be watchful for the Society's welfare, may have led me, perchance, in this matter beyond becoming bounds. But my purpose may show that this zeal is not altogether unworthy of pardon ; for in what I have said my one object has been to free my conscience from all scruples, at the same time reminding superiors of St. Gregory's warning to his disciple Peter who was in Sicily : " In regard to what I have written to you on the keeping of justice, I have set my conscience free, but if you neglect my words, you are bound in conscience. You have heard what I desire. See to it how you act."

I will add here, that subjects ought to assist superiors all they can in carrying out what is prescribed for us. This is the second thing to be looked to in the application of remedies, and has to do, as I said, with the patient who is under cure. The care of doctors will be all in vain, and it will be useless for them to prescribe medicines, however good in themselves, if the sick man refuses to take them, and will not put himself entirely in the hands of the physician. "Let us trust in God," and those who hold his place, says St. Ambrose, "showing ourselves quite ready to take whatever remedies he may advise, for He knows what is best for all our troubles. See how those who suffer in body long to be healed, and submit to the doctor in everything. How eager they are to prevent delay, they present themselves of their own accord, that the operation may be performed the sooner." Nay more, they are willing, if it be necessary, to be bound, in order to facilitate the operation and secure its success. This is that long martyrdom of the soul, and not of blood, which the saints attribute to the religious life. "Our life of peace has its martyrs, too," says St. Augustine; "for to repress anger, check the passions, keep justice, spurn avarice, and put down pride which is the aim and purpose of our Rules is the better part of martyrdom," and if it does not quite bring death, it surely tries the soul.

In the early ages of the Church, the martyrs who are the proud boast of our faith, gladly welcomed the display of instruments of torture set before their eyes to fill them with dread. Those noble souls had no choice, nor any fear, and heeded not in what form death came to them. They embraced their crosses, and kissed the chains that bound them. They pressed the scourges and goads to their breast, and unbidden fixed the iron bonds upon their sacred hands and necks. So, too, should the martyrs of the religious life, as St. Leo says, welcome the instruments of their torture, exalting them to the honors of their triumph. Nor ought they to rest content with merely showing themselves ready to accept the bonds of regulations and rules, but should bind them on, rejoicing and glorying in them, embracing them in transports of holy joy; and



this the more gladly, because they are the bonds of our own choice, and golden chains which most loving fathers have put upon their children, that while they are thus bound for a little while here below, they may be able to give their hearts and minds more generously to God, Who will soon be their great reward. To this King David invites us in two expressive words, as rich in meaning as they are concise, "Embrace discipline."<sup>(30)</sup> St. Hilary thus develops this expression: "By these words," he says, "the Prophet shows us the promptness and holy impatience that should animate us; he teaches us that we should not so much seek discipline as embrace it; that in the practice of obedience we ought not to be content with a languishing faith, but full of fervor we should embrace the law with holy zeal." While reflecting on this saying of the Psalmist, concerning the alacrity we should show in doing what obedience orders and embracing its commands as sweet chains that bind us, we should not forget the words of Origen which are so apposite: "We must embrace discipline," he says, "and clasp it in our arms, lest it escape us or fall to earth," and with it the religious life itself, which rests wholly upon discipline. St. Gregory Nazianzen called the first martyrs by that beautiful title "the world's bonds," for their constancy in the faith joined and bound the world to God. In like manner, I do not hesitate to call the later martyrs of religious obedience the bonds of the Society; for they maintain the Society, and keep its members united and bound to Christ "by the cords of Adam, with the bands of love,"<sup>(31)</sup> that is, by the holy bonds of our Rules. And it is clear what harm and confusion will come to the Society, if these ties are loosened or broken.

For this reason, our holy Father St. Ignatius, insists much on submission to superiors and perfect compliance with their will, and he seems to make the welfare and happiness of his children depend on this. He expresses this thought very clearly in his golden letter on obedience, in which he likens the Society to the heavens, and bids us imitate the harmony which reigns there. For in the

(30) Ps. ii. 12.

(31) Osee, xi. 4.

heavens, the higher bodies impart motion to those nearest them, and these in turn to those below, and all things move on in due order and rapidity, so that the body nearest us, not only suffers itself to be influenced in its revolutions by the earth, but is even borne along in its orbit under an irresistible impulse.

Nowhere, surely, is God better served than in the heavens, where all things do His will ; nowhere else are his commands so quickly heard, or executed with such rapidity and precision. The holy Prophet saw this, and in admiration cried out : " Thy word standeth firm in heaven, O Lord. "<sup>(32)</sup> St. Hilary makes an excellent remark on this passage, which illustrates and quite confirms what we have said. It will be well to consider his words, for he, too, like our holy Father Ignatius, sends us to the school of the heavens to learn perfect obedience. " There," says the Saint, " is no transgression, no change, no languor, no repose ; look upon the course of the sun, the phases of the moon, the position of the stars, their movements and evolutions. Do they not keep within their bounds, never breaking from the prescribed limits, or departing from the path marked out for them ? Change is not known there nor delay, nor neglect of any kind, for everything is fixed, and all move on in one unwearied round of obedience to established law. " We must believe," he adds, " that in like manner, the word of God also stands firm in the Saints who throng around His throne. "

All the world knows that we have been placed in a heaven of beauty and magnificence that has no equal ; in a heaven, to use the language of St. Peter Chrysologus, " whose dawn is our mother the Society, whose sun is our holy Father Ignatius ; and its stars are seen in the dazzling brightness of the virtues of our Brethren, who all these years have shed their glory over many lands. The light of day beams in our Mother's look ; upon our Father's face burns the splendor of the sun ; and the eyes of our companions are as stars that shine beyond the reach of darkness. The gloom of evil cannot reach those, who live in the lustre of so many virtues. "

(32) Ps. cxviii. 89.

If, however, by some strange phenomenon, there should appear in the firmament of religious life a meteor, formed from the foul and pestilential exhalations of the world, whose presence is all too near, that firmament is not, therefore, to be condemned. It is no sign that those heavens are about to fall, because that igneous body has kindled its deadly fires amid kindly and propitious stars ; for we see similar phenomena from time to time in the visible sky above us ; and even in the heaven of heavens, in the august abode of Divinity, and under the very eye of God, even there, baneful luminaries have been found and many stars have fallen. These strange things have happened in all systems however exalted. St. Augustine shows this clearly, and with much eloquence, in one of his most beautiful letters,<sup>(33)</sup> which I should like each of you to read at leisure for the consolation of your soul. As for myself, from all my heart and with much fervor, I pray our Lord Jesus Christ, who presides over the firmament of our religious life and rules all its movements, to keep these meteoric bodies from passing across the path of our heavens. However, as I was about to say, if it must happen that now and then some should appear, let us take consolation in this, that their passage is rapid and of short duration, and that they have become "vain in their thoughts,"<sup>(34)</sup> and faded from view, before they have had time to harm us by their malign influence. That no folly or madness may ever lead us to their distress, we should ever bear well in mind the wise counsel of St. Peter Chrysologus : "Let reverence for our Father hedge us round ;" that reverence and homage due our illustrious Founder, St. Ignatius, who has been to us so good and loving a father ; "let us find our strength in tender, deep affection for our Mother," the Society, for we would be most ungrateful children not to make this return for the love she bears us ; and "let the presence of our brethren ever keep us." Let us build our lives on the models they have set us, following the heroic examples they have left in the practice of every virtue. Let us shun all that might imperil our good name and splendid reputation.

<sup>(33)</sup> Letter 137.<sup>(34)</sup> Rom. i. 21.



Not to entertain these holy aspirations, bespeaks a heart without love and dead to every noble feeling ; for he surely either does not know his mother, the Society, or is not worthy to be counted among her children, who does not seek her glory and welfare.

God has inspired me with a very great desire to see the Society fulfil the wish of its founder, and shine as the heavens bright with stars. May the Society shine on earth, and may the splendor of its beams never be impaired by the presence of wandering stars or baneful meteors, since the Prophet Isaias calls the stars of heaven a host, or an army ranged in battle.

If it be true—and we cannot doubt it—that “they who instruct many to justice,” which is our special work, “shall shine as stars for all eternity,”<sup>(35)</sup> why do we not exert ourselves to merit this title and acquire so fair a portion ? Why do we not secure for ourselves this glory by showing in our lives the virtues of the stars ? “The sun was raised up, and the moon stood still in her order.”<sup>(36)</sup> This is the beautiful reading which the septuagint version gives of this passage of the Prophet Habacuc, and it falls in well with our present purpose. It is quite clear how the first part of the text has been verified ; for the sun, our Father Ignatius has been raised by God to a place among the saints, and has been set on high and clothed round about with undying glory in the kingdom of light ; and as we gaze upon him, his splendor floods the earth and grows in brightness from day to day. As to the second part of the text, it remains for us to accomplish it by our virtuous lives : “and the moon stood still in her order.” By the moon, the doctors of the Church understand also the stars. “Our order,” so speaks the eloquent St. Bernard on this passage, “is lowliness, humility, voluntary poverty, obedience, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Our order is to be under rule and discipline ; to train ourselves by prayer, and above all things to hold the more excellent way of charity.”

It is my wish and the fond desire of my heart that we may all shine as bright stars, abiding in the “order” fixed for us, and

(35) Dan. xii. 13.

(36) Habac. iii. 11.

shedding joy and gladness all around ; little heeding what our place may be, ready to work in our colleges and schools, or go on distant missions and wander over strange lands far from our native shores, as it shall seem good to Him who has called us to the Society. Would that we were like the stars in their rich poverty ! They possess nothing as their own, gather not, and hoard no treasure ; they seek no conveniences, and are well content with the common lot of all. Each night—and our nights for them are days—they receive the needs of life according to place and measure, and ever in unvarying round have from the sun that borrowed light with which they shine resplendent. Oh, that we had their unwearied charity that knows no fatigue ! for they come and go, and die each day a kind of death. They fade and waste away for the good of man and his pleasure. Would that we had that single bond of unity which is theirs ! for they have their life and all their splendor from one source alone, and their radiance is but a reflex of its glory. Would that we enjoyed their peerless beauty ! for they shine in heaven with all the effulgence of purest light, so free from blemish, that we cannot even imagine them other than bright and spotless. Would that we had that modesty, that love of solitude, that forgetfulness of self, which delights in concealment, and hides from view all its good and noble works, “that they may not be seen by men.”<sup>(37)</sup> Would, too, that we had that prompt obedience of the stars, ever ready and eager to do what is commanded. The Prophet tells us that the stars “were called and they said : Here we are ; and with cheerfulness they have shined forth to Him that made them.”<sup>(38)</sup> Oh, if we had but that spirit, then indeed would obedience be our light, and we should deem that all our splendor consisted in this, that we fulfil with holy gladness the orders that are given us ; that we perform with very great zeal what God demands of us, never suffering ourselves to be influenced by considerations of time, place, or work ; refusing nothing, seeking nothing ; never forcing superiors to yield to us, nor urging our wishes openly or covertly, by ourselves or others ;

<sup>(37)</sup> Matt. vi. 5.<sup>(38)</sup> Bar. iii. 35.

appearing in public when there is need, and then showing ourselves without affectation or fear before men ; equally disposed, when occasion offers, to go back into retirement, and disappear from the gaze of men ; utterly indifferent what our rank may be, well content to hold the first place or the last, finding all our joy in that position which our Lord and Master has fixed for us.

This is the very counsel that St. Gregory Nazianzen gives : " Let each one keep the place that has been assigned him, even though he be worthy to go higher, for he will gain more merit in resting content with the position given him, than in seeking another which he has not." And the Saint's closing words are quite in keeping with what we have been saying in connection with the stars. " Let no one," he continues, " expose himself to danger by going ahead to find the way, when he is free to follow the lead of another without risk ; let him keep the law of obedience, for that law is the security and support of all things in heaven and on earth."

Our holy Founder bids us cherish these sacred thoughts, and recommends the heavens as a school, where we may learn the practice of every virtue. This, I fancy, was the lesson he sought to learn, when he kept watch far into the night, gazing up at the clear sky and dwelling in spirit among the stars, whose brilliancy and beauty filled him with contempt for all the beauty earth had to show. He felt in himself the wisdom of St. Augustine's words : " if you wish to be like heaven, banish earth from your heart." Our saintly Father drew much profit from these hours of contemplation ; and it is no wonder that he should bid his children " look up to heaven and number the stars,"<sup>(39)</sup> since he himself set us the example. Philo, the Jew, seems to think that these words, which God spoke of old to Abraham, are meant to express the virtues and qualities of the stars, and not merely their numbers. He tells us that the reason of that pleasure we take in gazing on this beautiful spectacle is found in that insatiable desire we have of virtue. We bear about within us from our birth the impress of every virtue, a gift from the hand of God ; for God, he says, " has put

<sup>(39)</sup> Gen. xv. 5.



into the soul seeds of beauty and glory and immortality, even as He has fixed the stars in heaven." So, in like manner, the same writer maintains that those other words which God spoke to Abraham: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven,"<sup>(40)</sup> refer not so much to the multitude of his descendants, as to their progress and improvement: that is to say, they foretell a goodly race, grown mighty in virtue as well as numbers. We ought not, therefore, to felicitate ourselves overmuch, because, in the short lapse of a hundred years, our Society has filled the old world and has even spread beyond into the new. It is not necessary that we should compute our numbers or learn how many we are; but it is all important that we should know how far we are become virtuous and full of zeal for our own salvation and that of our neighbor; that we should examine whether we always give good example, whether we are solicitous for God's glory and faithful to our Constitutions and holy Rules; for this is what it means to become "a great nation," even "as the stars in heaven." God in giving his blessing to Abraham, did not attach great importance to the countless multitude of his descendants. He did not say, as Philo remarks in the same place, I will make of thee a vast nation, but a great nation. For He knew that mere numbers would not make a faultless people. Wisdom, too, and knowledge must be added, that is virtue and perfection, and by these gifts alone shall our greatness and excellence be like to the grandeur and beauty of the stars. I trust it was in the hope of this development and growth in sanctity, that our Lord, Who has been pleased in His mercy to watch over this least Society, promised to St. Ignatius from the beginning: "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and I will bless these." And on our part, how many motives there are to urge us to advance, as living stars, in the path of light, in perfection, regularity and obedience! If we neglect these virtues, we must fear that terrible threat of our Lord: "the stars shall fall from heaven."<sup>(41)</sup>

<sup>(40)</sup> Gen. xii. 2; xxii. 17.<sup>(41)</sup> Matt. xxiv. 20.

But these stars shall never fall, nor shall ruin ever come upon the heavens that encircle them, if only these heavens, and the stars too, "stand firm in their order;" that is to say, if only the Society keep its lowly place as the least among all the Religious Orders. Our holy Founder, in his pre-eminent self-contempt, loved to call the Order he founded, this least Society. And we may rest assured that our Order will find security only in the firm belief and profession of its lowliness and weakness. "We must shun pride," to quote the beautiful words of St. Leo, "for pride is ever near a fall; we must love humility, for it leads to elevation." Let the Society, therefore, cherish this modest title, and much more let it foster the spirit of humility, as the source of all its life and the fixed centre about which all should turn. Let the Society seek only the glory of God, and labor unsparingly for the good of souls; let it speak little of itself, and ever pay becoming respect and veneration to the older Orders. Let it show sweet charity to other religious bodies, and give them on all occasions every mark of esteem, and, conformably to our Institute, take pleasure in serving them and putting itself below them. But, above all, let it be in perfect harmony with that supreme and august body, which gives life and being to our Order and the whole religious world. Let the Society, I say, be in perfect accord with holy Church and its visible Head on earth, the Sovereign Pontiff, to whom our Blessed Father Ignatius has closely bound us, consecrating us to his service by a special vow. Let us understand well, that the more the Society fosters deep attachment and devotion to the holy See, as it is bound to do, the more it clings to the chair of Peter, and pays homage to Christ's Vicar, obeying him with love and zeal—a duty which I cannot too earnestly impress on you—the more will the Society be without fear in the midst of insults and the assaults of enemies, the more will it participate in that great and splendid promise: "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."<sup>(42)</sup>

And here I bring to a close the thoughts I wished to call to your attention. I have written this letter under the inspiration of

(42) Matt. xvi. 18.

very deep feeling and affection, and with my heart's blood, if I may so speak. Something tells me it is the last letter I shall ever address to the whole Society. And as the last words of men are wont to make a more lively impression and remain longer in the memory of those who hear them, I earnestly pray that these words of mine may sink deep into our hearts, beloved fathers and brothers, and be firmly graven "in the fleshy tables of the heart,"<sup>(43)</sup> for they have been dictated by the ardent desire I feel of seeing you reach very high perfection in the exact observance of our Rules. So I end with the words of Josue spoken long ago to his people: "I am old, and far advanced in years; and you see all that the Lord your God hath done to all the nations round about, how He himself hath fought for you; and now since He hath divided to you by lot all the land, from the east of the Jordan unto the great sea."<sup>(44)</sup> How clearly God has favored the Society during the course of this century! We are aware of His goodness and bounty, almost as though we saw it with our eyes. How many lands and how many peoples He "hath divided" unto us, even to the great sea and the farthest Indies! How He has blessed the labors and fatigues of His servants in the conversion of nations! How He has sustained them in battle against the enemies of His holy name! Who can recall all these countless, precious favors, without shedding tears of gratitude. Still let us not rest with this; many nations yet remain to be conquered; "the Lord your God will destroy them before your face,"<sup>(45)</sup> and through your valor will subject them to His yoke, as the glad consummation of all your zeal. This, however, He expects of you in return, "only take courage, and be careful to observe all things that are written in the book of the law of Moses; and turn not aside from them neither to the right hand nor to the left."<sup>(46)</sup>

Truly, God demands but little from us for the many great blessings He has conferred on us in the past, and still promises us in the future. He asks us merely to keep faithfully and observe exactly the rules which He has given us by His servant Ignatius and

<sup>(43)</sup> II. Cor. 3.<sup>(44)</sup> Jos. xxiii. 2.)<sup>(45)</sup> Jos. xxiii. 5.<sup>(46)</sup> Jos. xxiii. 6.



his successors. If you but do this, I give you the solemn assurance that you shall become "a great nation, and as the stars of heaven." "Behold this day I am going into the way of all the earth, and you shall know with all your mind that of all the words which the Lord promised to perform for you, not one hath failed." So it will be, I trust, by the help and favor of Him who knows how to find a way to accomplish what He ordains.

Therefore, in the midst of the rejoicings of this anniversary, I desire that all, superiors as well as subjects, should consecrate some time to retreat; and while following the Exercises of our holy Father, as I advised before, it would be well to look to our Rules, and go over in detail the Decrees and Ordinations of the Generals. I recommend in particular the re-reading and careful consideration of the letter which I addressed to all the Provinces soon after it pleased God to put on me this burden of office. Weigh well each point, and let nothing escape you; use the utmost care to find out whether anything needs to be corrected; whether obedience to rule has suffered in any way or grown languid, and whether the religious spirit flourishes and continues in its first vigor. And if on examination we find that religious observance has been at all impaired, with stout hearts and generous purpose, let us strive to make good the defect; and quickened by the remembrance of the many blessings we had enjoyed, let us work together, each in his own way, to maintain the Institute in all its integrity; inferiors, by yielding a ready and cheerful obedience in all things, "carefully keeping the observance of the Order," as St. Bernard says, "that the Order may keep us;" and superiors, on their part, by insisting much on that observance; but always sweetly, with paternal love and a charity begotten of God, that their diligence may show firmness rather than rigor, and preserve that measure of which St. Gregory speaks, when he recommends that "vigor should give strength to mildness, and mildness sweeten the vigor of discipline; and thus each will be an offset to the other, so that vigor may never degenerate into severity, nor mildness into weakness." Let all be fully persuaded that nothing is more

injurious to good government in religious bodies than inflexible harshness and undue severity ; while, on the other hand, all things yield to unbending firmness duly tempered with sweetness.

Let us remember, dear Fathers and Brothers, that the welfare of the Society rests upon each of us, for it is undoubtedly true, that we have in our hands the strength and the means to preserve the Society. And let us not forget that up to this we have lived on the glory won by the virtues and heroic deeds of our ancestors, and that to their merits we owe the splendid reputation which we enjoy among men. On us it now devolves, as we enter on another century, to infuse new life and energy into our work, and make fresh efforts in the way of sanctity. On us it devolves to establish ourselves so solidly in perfection, and raise so proud a monument of enduring virtue, that our successors may never be tempted to part with the heritage left them, for seeing us so near they will fix their gaze on us, and follow closely in our footprints, treading the path we trod, whether it be straight or crooked.

I must here tell you of a favor which the Sovereign Pontiff Urban VIII., has bestowed on us, as a special mark of the love and esteem he bears us ; and though I mention it only at the end of my letter, I am sure you will find it not the least among the incentives to fresh progress in virtue at this time. His Holiness, in token of approval, has kindly deigned to honor by his presence and his benediction the ceremonies of thanksgiving held in gratitude to God for the blessings He has brought us during these hundred years ; and wishing to make this happy occasion one of sweet remembrance and very fruitful for us, he has granted a Jubilee to the whole Society, for its preservation and progress in the service of God. That this great favor may bring with it abundant and lasting fruit, I earnestly pray and exhort you all, and, as far as I can, entreat you to prepare for it by going through the Spiritual Exercises with fervor, and especially, by making a very sincere and generous confession of your whole life past in the Society, or of that portion which has elapsed since your last general confession, as each one finds therein more consolation and profit in our Lord.

I leave the choice of the day on which to gain the indulgence of the Jubilee to the convenience and piety of each one, and to the prudence of superiors, who will direct all things wisely. Still, I cannot refrain from saying that it would afford me great consolation if all could be ended for the approaching feast of our holy Father Saint Ignatius, or within the octave. I would wish thus to crown his triumph, and procure for him upon his feast that greatest of joys and honors, to see the daughter so dear to his heart, and so tenderly beloved by him, appearing before him in all that fairness and beauty she had in the hour of her birth, "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."<sup>(47)</sup> May our heavenly Father who "has called us," through His faithful servant Ignatius, "to the Society of His son," grant in His mercy that we may also be transformed into the likeness of His son through the grace of this Jubilee.

Once more, dear Fathers and Brothers, in that deep love I bear you, I embrace you all most tenderly in Christ Jesus, to whose sweet mercy I commend you, in the hope that He will bless you in this renewal of spirit and give you new strength in His service. But first let me say with St. Bernard, that "in return for this letter, I ask an answer from your charity, and one of deed, not of word ;," and I fondly beg in the words of Saint Gregory, that great master in the art of self-contempt, "that those who read this letter may grant me the solace of their prayers before a stern judge, and wash away with their tears whatever stains may be found in me. Meanwhile I know, that comparing my letter with the prayers that shall be said for me, my readers will give me in return far more than I give them, seeing that they pay me in tears for the poor words I have spoken.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

The servant of all in Christ,

MUTIUS VITELLESCHI.

*Rome,*

*Nov. 15, 1639.*

<sup>(47)</sup> Ephes v. 27.



## IX.

A LETTER OF OUR VERY REV. FATHER FRANCIS PICCOLOMINI  
TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY ON THE  
UTILITY AND NECESSITY OF ENFORCING THE RULE.

When an architect draws up the plan of a building, there are three things to which he must give especial attention: the interior structure of the building, the external approaches and surroundings, and the proper distribution of light and air. And of these three he must undoubtedly give his most serious consideration to the distribution of light and air, for without them a building is unattractive and uninhabitable. This is admirably seen in the creation of the world, the handiwork of the Divine architect. For, as St. Ambrose observes, God did not lay the first foundations of the universe, till He had created a copious flood of light from the boundless resources of His own splendor. It is for this reason that the Saint says, and that with much wisdom, that he who would build a house should first of all, even before thinking of laying the foundations, consider how he may get light into it. This is the first ornament of a house. If it be wanting, the whole house is unsightly and useless. These three things are essential considerations for every architect, but they alone will not suffice for the perfecting of the work. They did suffice, it is true, in one case, namely, when the divine Architect of the world called it into being, for with Him to will is to do. He needs no workman's help to aid the creative power of His omnipotence. It is not thus with man. Without the diligent efforts of many workmen to raise the edifice, and without overseers to direct them, art is powerless to execute the design which man conceives.

What we have said of the material edifice, is in its own way applicable to the spiritual, as may be seen in the edifice of our Society. By an extraordinary favor of God, its architect has omitted nothing in its design which art or wisdom could devise. In its interior structure the various labors, offices and degrees, suited to

each one's capacity, form a harmonious blending of parts. As to its position and external relations, it has been placed at the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff, as the least of all the religious orders. All ambition of ecclesiastical dignities is forbidden its members and they cannot accept them if offered. They have no fixed abode, but like the changing stars, are, at a moment's warning, ready to change their abode, not to gratify curiosity and to see the world, but that a limitless field may be open to their zeal. Finally, as to the light of our edifice, our meditations, studies, examinations of conscience, are so many windows opening out in all directions to receive at all hours of the day the inflowing rays of heavenly ideas.

All these elements of our spiritual structure are clearly set forth, as well in the first plan of the Society, which our illustrious architect, St. Ignatius, formed, as in the subsequent additions, which his successors and General Congregations, after serious deliberation based on the test of time and experience, have deemed it expedient to add in the form of Decrees, Ordinations, and Industries. Even with such abundant provision, a very important factor would be wanting, if there were not at hand a number of energetic overseers to enforce what others have wisely thought out. Our Institute, however, in spite of its admirable structure, would avail but little, if, as St. Paulinus says, instead of finding in our own hearts the living reality corresponding to those praises which we hear about ourselves, we find within us only a sterile soul and we hold before us only empty hands reproaching us for sloth.

God wills not to be the builder of all those buildings which He designs. It is true that He had to be the builder and designer in the first creation of the universe, in whose construction He could call in no second cause to share the work with Him. But in the other works outlined by His wisdom He has willed that creatures should help in them, and share in their glory and credit. This was His conduct in the building of the tabernacle, which was to be the place of safe-keeping for His law ; for He bade the Israelites

to help with all energy in adorning the Tabernacle ; “ And while they were earnest about the work, the people daily in the morning offered their vows.” <sup>(1)</sup> Again what was Solomon’s course in the erection of the splendid Temple of Jerusalem ? He had received a clear intimation from David, his father, of the work which he was to do. And though the form of the Temple was conceived in heaven, yet Solomon never presumed so much upon his skill and wisdom as to hope to raise so stupendous a pile to perfection without the aid of skilled overseers and builders and earnest laborers, whom he accordingly summoned in large numbers from other nations.

In the execution of a plan, more difficulties will be met with, the more perfect the structure is. The executer of the plan must in consequence be a man of great skill, who can comprehend the whole plan, and whose relentless energy can break down all obstacles which present themselves. If this be true in the case of a dead and silent temple, how much more is it verified in a temple which lives and breathes, and in which in a sublimer way the Most High dwells and sets the seat and the throne of His glory. Cassian has given expression to a thought of the same tenor : “ We read,” he says, “ that Solomon, though the wisest of man, nay more, gifted with infused wisdom from on high, when he wished to build the magnificent temple of the Lord, did not rely upon his own resources alone, but sought aid of a foreign king. He brought from Tyre Hiram, the son of a widow, and while the divine wisdom suggested the plan, this man wrought all the fine work in the temple and in the sacred vessels.” In the mind of Solomon, the right execution of the work, the direction of overseers, and the labor of many hands, held so important a place that without them the divine plan dictated by God Himself was, as it were, of no value. Again Cassian writes to Castor, the father of modern monks ; “ You do well to deign to associate me, who am weak and poor in every respect, in your great work, the work of building up to God a true and rational temple, a temple not built of senseless stones, but a

(1) Exod. xxxvi. 3.



Congregation of holy men, not a temporal and corruptible temple, but an eternal one : the work of consecrating to the Lord precious vessels, not of gold or silver, but holy souls, who sparkle with the integrity of innocence, justice, and charity, and bear about in them Christ the King."

How much more justly can I say to Ignatius, or rather to Christ Himself, for the Society is in a special way Christ's work, "Thou hast deigned to associate me, though weak and poor in every respect, in thy great work." What other purpose can He have in calling me to a share in His work except that I should superintend it and carefully and zealously see to the execution? But I am not alone in this duty. All the superiors share it with me, and on them, as overseers of the work, the duty of enforcing the rule is incumbent. Wherefore it seems to me when God entrusts to me my office, and along with it the volume of the Constitutions, which are the plan of the Society, at the same time He says to me and to all other superiors of the Society, what He said to Moses after He had revealed to him the form of the Tabernacle; "Look and make it according to the pattern."<sup>(2)</sup> The Lord likewise enjoins on us, in accordance with our duty as superiors set over so great a work, never to turn eye or heart from this model of the Constitution, but to make them live exactly in ourselves and in the others entrusted to our care.

Let us then examine the model, beginning with the very foundations and with the very first stones which are set in our edifice. Our holy Father has put down in the General Examen very wise directions to determine the qualities of those who are to be admitted to the Society. But of what avail will those regulations be, if they are neglected by those who are appointed to be directors of the young, and by those who are deputed to examine and test vocations? Some directors suffer themselves to be swayed by every passing mood; their inordinate charity, in adding members to the body of the Society, looks to the utility of the members rather than to that of the body. They care not a whit for the common good,

(2) Exod. xxv. 40.

which ought to be the first rule of charity, for it is a thing more divine than the individual good. Other directors seem to have the hope that religion, regardless of the surroundings of air and climate, can with perfect ease cause lilies to grow in sterile slime. Such a hope is empty and fallacious; for unless there be some germ at least to start with, such soil is utterly incapable of producing living organisms of the higher species. Again it may happen that the ardor of an ill-regulated friendship and the unseemly desire of perpetuating friendly intercourse with some one, will lead a director to go so far as to impose on his friend a burden altogether beyond his capacity. What a subject for life-long regret such a director has! He sees when too late the evil that has been done, and he sees the danger of a sad falling away, a misfortune that commonly follows forced vocations. Finally, some, insensible to the dictates of common sense, take a vain pride in the fact that they have sent many subjects to the Society. They seem never to advert to the fact that a large number of these must be rejected. Not all food is nutrition for the body, and a healthy body will reject whatever is superfluous and injurious; but there is great danger that the stomach will receive some detriment from the noxious food with which it is overburdened, even though it succeed in rejecting it.

In the examen St. Ignatius traced the first outlines which he had conceived, and described the external approach to this temple of ours; in other words, he set a standard and measure to test the vocations of those who present themselves to the Society. He prescribed that the dispositions and habits of a candidate should be scrutinized with as much care as was displayed in the Old Law in the examination of victims destined for sacrifice. These were very carefully examined. "So great is the care," says Philo, "both of those who present the victims and of those who slay them, that the best and most experienced among the priests are deputed to examine the whole body, beginning with the very feet, so that it may be impossible for the smallest speck to remain concealed." And the reason for this care, he continues,

“is not on account of the victims, but that those who offer them may be without sin. In the same way he who wishes to offer a vow or to pay a vow already made is reminded to present to God a clean and spotless soul. For God will avert His face from the offering of a soul disfigured by vice or disease.” Even one slight blot, one little stain on the soul of him who is consecrated to God is enough to offend His pure eye and to make Him turn away in wrath. Wherefore, those who examine or approve the victims whom they are to offer in the Society, as a sacrifice to the Most High, must do this duty in such a way that they can with a safe conscience lay their hands upon the victims and give that beautiful testimony of innocence, which, to quote Philo once more, the Priest of old was wont to give : “ When the hands are placed upon the victim it is a certain sign of innocence and of an exact and blameless life. For God demands in the first place of one who offers sacrifice, a pure and holy heart trained in piety ; in the next place a life adorned with good deeds, so that while he places his hand upon the victim, he can say with a safe conscience, these hands have never been stained with innocent blood, have done no injury, have co-operated in no foul deed, but only in such as are upright.”

I cannot expect that on entering the Society absolute perfection is to be found in the candidates ; for there is no hope that so great a good can be had from the unmoulded clay of Adam, but religion fashions it into vessels which will shine unto honor. If as a matter of fact this perfection were possessed in the beginning, religion would cease to be the way and school of perfection, but perfection itself. We know, however, that perfection is proper to the degree of Bishop. The benefit that the Religious Orders confer upon the human race is that they take the salted waters of the sea of the world, change them into sweet, and by degrees convert them into dew, which again in its turn forms precious pearls of virtue in that same sea whence it came. It is not, therefore, my meaning that the material should come into our hands finished and developed in its own proper form and species before receiving that form from



religion, but what I mean is, that in the choice of material, care must be taken, because not all material is capable of receiving the form of religion. In men, as in fruits, it is necessary to distinguish defects of nature from defects of age, for the former are innate and permanent, while the latter are changeable and passing. To give one or two examples. He who resists and opposes his superiors, clinging to the stubborn perversity of his own will, or trusting with boundless confidence to his own judgment, is not a stone fit to be inserted in our edifice ; nor is he who hides himself within the depth and darkness of his own mind, and will not open himself to such as ought to know his interior. Equally unfit is he who covets the highest positions and frets under subjection, accounting another's elevation his disgrace. Again, he is altogether unsuited to our life, who is enslaved to sensuality, and, under the mastery of his ruling passion, accounts as necessary what in truth is of its nature superfluous.

Although talent and health are not, like virtue, meritorious, but are pure gifts of nature, without which strictly speaking one can aspire to spiritual development, still they are necessary instruments and aids for the exercise of those works by which merit is acquired, and for the acquisition of the perfection peculiar to the Society. Indeed, health is so necessary that without it, mental labors and the endurance of the inconveniences of common life are impossible. As a consequence, he who is in bad health bears about the same relation to a religious community that a dislocated bone bears to the rest of the body. It cannot do anything for itself and it is an impediment to the other members.

On the other hand, mental excellence is not so necessary for every member, that the want of it cannot be compensated for by humility of heart, that virtue by which a soul seeks always and with alacrity what is lowliest, not relying upon itself, but armed with the grace and spurred by the love of that God, Who has made the lowest humiliation the stepping-stone to the highest exaltation. Candidates who are endowed with but mediocre talent may at times be admitted among the number of those who give themselves to

letters, provided however they possess this humility of spirit and other compensating qualities. For just as in the nourishment of the body not all the food is transformed into the heart and the eyes, but some of it also goes to the development of other parts of less dignity, without whose help neither heart nor eyes can exercise their functions, so in the same way not all are to be admitted into the Society to become masters or writers in various lines, but some are to be admitted to take upon themselves the burden of certain duties which would otherwise deprive the masters and writers of the leisure needed for their studies. However, in the admission of candidates to the Society our eyes should always be fixed above the desired mark, for we know by experience that the fruits do not usually correspond to our expectations, for the obvious reason that in the sowing a few tares creep in, which, few as they are, multiply exceedingly in the reaping.

Let us now pass from the outside to the interior of the building, and let us examine in the first part of the Constitutions the idea of the novitiate and the form according to which the novices are to be moulded. I think it is no exaggeration of the purpose of our Founder, to say that the Constitutions show it to be his wish in the formation of his children to form so many angels. In several places in the Constitutions he has spoken in their regard as St. John the Apostle spoke in his letters to the seven bishops of Asia, whom St. John appropriately called angels. These men, however, though angels, still live in the flesh and are in consequence subject to defects, in this respect unlike the angels, who are pure spirits and immutable in their state. It is for this reason that they need help to avoid evil and to procure those blessings which St. John has described in his famous letters in the Apocalypse, and which St. Ignatius has in great part transcribed into his Constitutions.

In the first part, therefore, is described the formation of the good novice, to whom the door of religion is opened by the key of divine inspiration, manifested in the call to the religious life. "And to the angel of Philadelphia, write: These things saith he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; shut-

teth, and no man openeth ; Behold I have given before thee a door opened.”<sup>(3)</sup> Here we have the first element in the formation of the religious, the firm foundation of the novitiate life, and of all that is to follow, namely that the doors be opened to the novice by the celestial keys of a divine vocation, not by the false and deceitful keys of earthly motives, such as for instance, affliction or domestic troubles, or a merely human ambition to excel in letters. Reasons similar to these may sometimes be the occasion, but never should be the cause and motive of vocation. It may happen that these false keys do sometimes afford an entrance, but they have not the power to close the door firmly, so as to prevent going out, for the doors remain so lightly closed that they open at the first touch, and the novice returns to the world. To such a one the true father of the family will not say, “I have loved thee, and I will keep thee from the hour of temptation.”<sup>(4)</sup>

By these words the necessity of trust in God is suggested, which is the second element of formation, and which grows naturally out of the first, for it is by God’s powerful right hand alone that one can hope to abide forever in that life to which in obedience to the heavenly vocation he has given himself. From this confidence springs the last element in the formation, perseverance in what has been begun. St. John admirably describes it : “Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown ; He that shall overcome, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God ; and he shall go out no more.”<sup>(5)</sup> There can be no persevering where there has never been a beginning, and God usually does not give His help to carry on with ease a work which has in reality never been undertaken for His sake. Therefore on the first element, or condition the other two depend. A novice ought to goad himself on continually, asking himself almost every instant, “Ad quid venisti,” what hast thou come for ? St. Ignatius’s own words in the Constitutions beautifully inculcate this frequent self-questioning, when he says, “that one should consider frequently with himself

<sup>(3)</sup> Apoc. iii. 7.

<sup>(4)</sup> Apoc. iii. 9, 10.

<sup>(5)</sup> Apoc. iii. 11, 12.



and with God his vocation, and his purpose of serving the divine and sovereign majesty in this Society."

We have described the true image and perfect pattern of a novice, but to mould the man after this exemplar, to elevate flesh and blood to agree with this ideal, requires hard work, it is a laborious and difficult task. The novice just fresh from the world, still inflamed with worldly desires, cannot comprehend the strange doctrine and wisdom which Christ teaches him about contempt of self. He is as the new-born babe who cannot eat bread, because it is too solid a food for him. It devolves upon the mother to break up the food, to prepare and transform it, and to offer it to the babe in the form of milk. As St. Augustine has it: "What the mother eats, the babe eats; but as the babe himself cannot eat bread, the mother transforms the bread into her own flesh, and by the milk of her breast feeds her babe on the same bread. It is the same bread which nourishes the babe and the mother; the babe however cannot take it at table, while he can do so at the mother's breast. The bread therefore is transformed into the mother's milk, that thus the same food may be given to the little babe." The superior and Master of Novices is father, mother, and nurse of the novice. He has to break for him the too solid bread, to crush it, to convert it into milk, and thus offer it to the novice.

In this formation of the novice the teaching and direction of the Master of Novices in words are not enough, but deeds also are necessary, which show the practice of what is taught; or, as Sidonius Apollinaris says, one must aid the tongue with the hand, so that the tongue first may feed the famishing soul with salutary advice, and then the hand may draw from the treasury of love and do the deeds of love with that measure of humility to which we should aspire. If the novice be liberally fed and fattened on this milk by his superior, we may with certainty expect from him that virtue which is demanded of religious already well advanced in perfection. St. Bernard has beautifully called the dawn, the hope of the sun, and the flower, the hope of the fruit. In the same

way we have every reason to hope that the exact and faithful novice will one day be the professed of exemplary life.

If it happen that a Master of Novices becomes weary of the careful nurturing of the children of Christ ; or if he allow himself to be diverted from his duty by other works which, though spiritual, are not in keeping with his office, such as sacred duties, preaching, and attention to the salvation of persons not committed to his charge ; or again if he be ashamed to exact a degree of perfection from others, which he does not practise himself, what will be the result ? The novices cannot grow strong on the bread of Christ, and grow up in the life of the spirit, because their master in the spirit neglects to supply proper nourishment, that is, he does not transform their food into milk in his own life and substance.

Sometimes a Master of Novices has an inordinate longing to preserve for the Society every single one of those entrusted to his custody. Such a one will certainly be forced to gloss over or conceal many moral diseases of the novice, which in the end will become fatal maladies for the individual and a source of contagion for the community. What can the Society promise herself from a novice of this kind, except the painful necessity sooner or later of severing an incurable member to prevent the poison from infecting the whole body. The unfortunate individual himself, on account of the whole course of his past life, is in danger of going headlong to a wretched and shameful ruin, "from on high down to the lowest abyss, from heaven to the slime of earth, from the cloister to the world, from paradise to hell," as St. Bernard expresses it.

The Master of Novices should bear in mind that the living fruit of the Society is to measure its fertility not from its abundance, but from its quality. Our holy Father has spoken on this matter in strong terms : "Neither order nor union can exist in a large body of men whose passions are under imperfect control." The husbandman who takes pains to separate the cockle from the wheat, giving his master the wheat only, really gives more to his master, though he appears to give him less. In the second part of the Constitutions our holy Father inculcates this

separation of the cockle from the wheat, where he prescribes with prudent charity the mode of dismissing subjects who, if united with us, would be as injurious as the superfluous humors of the body which impair the health and render the body susceptible to many maladies.

If any one foolishly blushes with shame to see any reduction in the number of his novices, let him turn his eyes to the great Master of the greatest of religious societies, God Himself, Who in the beginning selected novices of most perfect disposition and of most exalted vocation. He placed them in the abode of sanctity, within the very enclosure of heaven itself, made expressly for them by His own hand only a short time before, and yet He did not blush nor did He account it a defect in His wisdom that He had to despoil them of their heavenly home. Again when uncreated Wisdom, clothed in our flesh, had chosen for Himself out of the whole human race twelve novices, and had fed them on the dew of the divine word and example with unremitting care, He did not account it matter of shame that posterity should know that many of them had shamefully deserted Him; that the Chief had denied Him, and that one had deliberately betrayed Him and never shown any sign of repentance.

The right of dismissal among us affects every grade, except that of the Professed. However, the exercise of this privilege is more or less restricted according to the nature of the bond that binds each one to the Society. Even with novices charity and justice forbid that it should be used without prudence and consideration. But here two dangers, quite opposite in character, confront us; the first is a vain compassion or weakness of character which never faces the task of cutting off the infectious member, but temporizes, hesitates a long time, and finally comes to a conclusion when it is too late; the second is impatience to effect a speedy cure, and an ill-governed haste in cutting off the member, without any heed to the opportuneness of the act, while a little delay might have brought about the cure of the distemper. Even the most ignorant doctor knows enough to say that a putrid portion of the body



should be severed. Even an unskilled husbandman is wise enough to know that a barren fig tree ought to be uprooted. But knowledge and art are required to discern whether there be any hope of saving the member, or of raising fruit. Knowledge and art are required for the proper treatment of any disease, and for the patient and constant appliance of suitable remedies.

Let us suppose, for example, that you see with the eagle eye of St. John that the first fervor of the Angel of Laodicea is growing cold. Why do you not admonish him? Why do you not inflame his heart? Why do you not, with the same St. John terrify him? "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot, but because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." <sup>(6)</sup> He is on the brink of ruin, and what is worst of all, knows it not. Why do you not point out to him his miserable state? "Thou sayest, I am rich and made wealthy; and knowest not, that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." <sup>(7)</sup> Why do you not show to him and open to him the treasures of divine goodness and charity, wherein he may enrich himself and escape entirely from his sordid poverty? "I counsel thee to buy of me gold fire-tried, that thou mayest be made rich, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear." <sup>(8)</sup> And if these divine treasures are not sufficient to touch him, why do you not open out and spread before him those other very different treasures of the divine wrath? "And anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see: Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise." <sup>(9)</sup> Last of all, if the warning of words be inefficient, then let the hand of the surgeon be applied. Abandon gentle remedies, use such as are harsh and radical, the burning-iron and the knife. Lose no time, but proceed to execution. And since you perceive that corruption is eating away not merely the body of the wretched sick man, but his soul also, apply remedies, says Clement of Rome, which will cure the imposthume. If the body and soul alike of some religious begin to corrupt, you must first scrape away the putrefaction with a knife; "if filth gather,

<sup>(6)</sup> Apoc. iii. 15.

<sup>(7)</sup> Apoc. iii. 17.

<sup>(8)</sup> Apoc. iii. 18.

<sup>(9)</sup> Apoc. iii. 18, 19.

purge it away with a keen-edged knife." If animalculæ soon after breed and raise a swollen sore, you must apply immediately ointment which will stifle them; "if a swelling appear, allay it by a purifying salve." Again, if the swelling increases, and, as the putrid matter is taken away, the member withers, you must burn with red-hot iron the swollen rotting mass: "check the disease with the caustic." If the evil goes on, and gangrene threatens to set in, then "pluck out the plague spot," and sacrifice the infected part that the whole body may be saved.

It is well, however, to call to mind how inconsolably St. Bernard once wept over the unexpected departure of a certain Robert, one of his brethren and spiritual sons. The saint calls God to witness that he himself is blameless in the matter: "Thou knowest with what compassion I always helped him in all his temptations, with what sighs I appealed to Thy paternal love for him, how I was distressed, afflicted, tormented at his falls, his troubles, and temptations." And still St. Bernard's charity made him feel guilty, although in reality he had done all that was possible. "If it was my fault that thou didst go away, if I have been too severe to a young man delicately nurtured, and if I have treated too harshly a tender plant, do but change thyself and thou wilt find me changed, and come and embrace with confidence as a friend him whom thou didst before dread as a master."

After our holy Father has, as it were, driven out the sons of the bond-woman and retained the sons of the free, after Ismael's rejection and Isaac's appointment to the inheritance, he devotes the third part of the Constitutions to the preservation and development of this true and genuine offspring. For it is not enough to begin well, but one must confirm and strengthen himself in what has been well begun. Just as it is not sufficient for the young sprout or vine to blossom, but the blossom must be strong and remain, for the hope of fruit depends on the permanence of the flower. The high resolves conceived in the noviceship are as flowers. "Where," says St. Bernard, "is the grape-cluster of good works? The new form of life, the elevation to something higher is the

flower ; I confess the change that greets my eye is most pleasing, the novice takes less heed of his body and of his vesture, he speaks less frequently, his countenance is more cheerful, his look more modest, his gait more grave." These are the new and early blossoms, exhaling a sweet odor and presenting a beautiful spectacle in the gardens of novitiates. " But because these changes have but newly begun," continues the saint, " they are to be accounted as blossoms merely, and as the hope of fruit to come, rather than as the fruit itself. I dread the effect of the burning heats upon these blossoms, and I fear the north wind and the chill air of the morning. If the soul lulls itself to repose for a time, and this chill penetrates it, a kind of spiritual rigor comes over it, its vigor relaxes, languor takes possession of it, fervor declines, and tepidity usurps its place."

It is for this reason that our holy Father, in the third part of the Constitutions, prescribes the means by which the primitive fervor of the novices may be kept and increased in the houses and colleges : " That thus they may advance in the way of God, in spirit and in virtues," to quote his own words from the first chapter. Well may he speak thus ; for although in this heaven of religion all the religious are angels, except those who cast themselves down " out of the midst of the stones of fire,"<sup>(10)</sup> nevertheless even angels who are not yet confirmed in the grace of God are liable to change and ruin. The great bishop of Ephesus, Timothy, was an angel, and yet St. John addressed a letter to him in person, reprehending him for suffering his first fervor to grow cool. St. John admonishes him and urges him by various motives to return to his former fervor, holding up to him first the loftiness of the divine vocation, which has placed him like a gem in the ring of Christ, and like a star in His right hand. " These things saith He who holdeth the seven stars in His right hand."<sup>(11)</sup> Then St. John reminds him of his early fervor, and of his praiseworthy deeds done in the past, and of the evils endured for Christ. " Thou hast endured for my name, and hast not fainted ;"<sup>(12)</sup> finally, the saint denounces the

<sup>(10)</sup> *Ezech.* xxviii. 16.

<sup>(11)</sup> *Apoc.* ii. 1.

<sup>(12)</sup> *Apoc.* ii. 3.



danger which threatens, if he should fall from his first fervor, "I will move thy candlestick out of its place."<sup>(13)</sup>

From this example our holy Father points out three stages in the correction of those who are wandering from the right path. "Those who err should first be admonished in charity and sweetness; the second time with the same charity, but so as to make them blush for shame; finally, add motives of fear to the gentle leading of love." St. Ignatius learned this harmony of gentleness and strength from St. Bernard's beautiful teaching: "What a good mother charity is! She solaces the weak, she exercises the sturdy, she chides the erring, but she loves all as her children. When she chides you, she is gentle; when she caresses, she is sincere; her severity is maternal, her soothing is without guile, her anger is patient, her indignation is full of humility."

The sweeter the medicine, the easier it is to take, and the more it endears the physician to the patient. All medicines which nature prescribes for her own inevitable ills are pleasant and agreeable, as food, drink, and sleep. But because most of our ailments come from our own excess, and because the man who has once fallen victim to disease, will hardly take any pains to avoid it a second time, if the remedies themselves are pleasant to his palate, nature has provided against such ills bitter and disagreeable remedies. Remedies of this sort are necessary for moral relapses, in which the disease breaks out again after the first admonition in charity and gentleness. The bitterness of the remedy in this case consists in shame and confusion which effectually compensate by their unpleasantness for the pleasure begotten of sin. In spite of the bitter remedy, there are some who, just to enjoy the present pleasure of their unbridled desires, are perfectly willing to submit to a disagreeable medicine in the future. Here again nature affords a check to their temerity in the fear of death or of incurable ills to follow. Our holy Father, in like manner, bids us have recourse to this sort of fear, to add force and efficacy to the medicine, when

<sup>(13)</sup> Apoc. ii. 5.

the gentler remedies of the second class are not enough to cure the relapses of Ours.

In the correction of subjects, the superior must avoid two extremes: the first is to show weakness and timidity, when he happens to consider the singular natural endowments of the guilty one or the temporal benefits which he has bestowed upon the Society. A weak superior is powerless to give strong, manly correction, when God's glory demands it. His admonitions are as vain as the barking of a toothless dog. The other extreme is to appear to despair of the subject's amendment, or if he happen to correct his fault to show no indulgence to him. Admonition of its very nature inflicts a wound, but when unaccompanied by mercy the wound comes rather from an executioner than from a surgeon, who never tortures the sick man, even when despairing of his cure. It is well to remember that it is not merely out of compassion for the sinner, but also out of regard for the good of the whole human race, that God has benevolently provided that every man, so long as life lasts, may hope for pardon, even for the greatest of crimes. For this reason the Apostle, exhorting the Ephesians to charity, forbearance, and union among themselves, after alleging the strongest possible motive in these words, "in one hope of your calling:"<sup>(14)</sup> then added that some of the heathen had cast themselves into an abyss of all manner of evil through despair.

In the fourth part of the Constitutions our holy Father turns his attention to the preservation of regular discipline among the scholastics, and he prescribes the means of destroying all negligence in the very germ. He recommends, as a most useful preventive, that superiors foster ardor in literary pursuits as being the enemy of sloth, the preserver of silence, and a check on passion, and too much liberty. This same ardor in studies is the most effectual means to form suitable and well-equipped members of the Society, and, as a consequence, to draw them to love and cherish the Society more affectionately; for a man naturally feels inclined to spend his life in that body of men, in which he sees that he can, without

<sup>(14)</sup> Ephes. iv. 4.

great difficulty, be a useful and desirable member. On the other hand if a man be absolutely destitute of the only coin which passes current in a certain country, it is certain that he will never consent to remain in that country.

In this matter of studies superiors may do wrong, both by neglect and excess. They surely are wanting in their duty, who imagine that the scholastics have done enough, when they have done what is absolutely necessary, no matter after what fashion, without urging them to perfection in their work. If the superior were to employ them in occupations which do not pertain to them, but whose fruit is present and manifest, and affects the time of his own administration, he would certainly be wanting in his duty, and altogether unmindful of the principle inculcated by our holy Father, "that the scholastics should be persuaded that they can do nothing in colleges so pleasing to God as to apply themselves diligently to study with that pure intention of which we have spoken." Such a superior is also heedless of another instruction of our holy Father, namely that all occupations which distract from this one pursuit are to be avoided. Perhaps some superior may get the idea that excellence in science is opposed to humility. In this again he errs, for if it were true, we should have to avoid everything that is not of its nature lowly. Or maybe the superior is not himself eminent in learning, for want of time, of talent, or for whatsoever cause; and for this reason he is blind to its excellence, and despises it in others. Such an erroneous opinion is most injurious, for those who are eminent in letters can be of great service to the Church in times of great need; and by the mercy of God many of our Society have, as we all know, rendered such services. Besides, those who excel give intellectual food to the large number of men of mediocre ability; and finally, sciences, like all other things human, would decline, unless divine Providence from time to time were to raise up men of distinction to revive them by their genius.

The second source of error for the superior, in regard to studies,



is in excess ; for instance, if he were to look down with contempt upon ordinary labors of his subjects, forgetting that in all classes of created things there are certain intermediate perfections, which preserve the harmony of the universe, and that ordinary knowledge joined with virtue and a right intention can achieve very great results. Another instance of excess would be in the superior who would pass over and dissimulate defects in men of brilliant parts. What else does he do but put a sharp two-edged sword into a strong man's hands, and then let him wield it at the beck of his own wrath or frenzy ? The words of our holy Father in the Introduction to the fourth Part may be profitably pondered in this connection : " After a proper foundation of self-abnegation and of the necessary progress in virtue shall have been laid in those who have been admitted to probation, attention must be paid to the literary edifice and to the manner of utilizing it, so that it may help our members to know and serve God better."

As walls without a foundation are only in the way and are liable to collapse, so is the edifice of letters without the foundation of virtue, and of that virtue in particular which of its very nature take its place as the lowest stone in the foundation, namely humility. This virtue is necessary for men of every grade of ability : for the man of ordinary talent, to enable him to bear his mediocrity with cheerfulness ; for the more distinguished, that his eminence may not lead him to ruin. If wisdom is a gem, humility should be its setting, which, as in the case of every precious jewel, is necessary to prevent the jewel from dropping to the ground and being lost. Here again, as I have done all through this letter, let me appeal to the example of the angels. When, in the celestial ruin, they had first suffered the loss of this gem, they soon found themselves miserably fallen and overwhelmed in a depth of evil. How hast thou fallen, Lucifer ? " Thou wast the seal of resemblance, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, in the pleasures of the paradise of God." <sup>(15)</sup> How hast thou fallen ? The answer comes : " Thou hast lost thy wisdom in thy beauty," that is to

<sup>(15)</sup> Ezech. xxviii. 12.

say, as St. Bernard well interprets, by first losing thy humility and conceiving a vain pride on account of thy wisdom. "He lost it, when he accounted it his own; for thus to possess, is to lose. I wish not beauty, which takes away my wisdom."

Observe that the first angel, who fell from heaven, commonly called Lucifer, is often called the cherubim by Ezechiel: "I have destroyed thee, O Cherub, out of the midst of the stones of fire."<sup>(16)</sup> Was he only a cherub? Was he not a seraph, one of that choir of angels which is above all the others, nay, perhaps the chief of all the seraphim, and possessing in himself all the virtues distributed among the nine choirs? "Every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the jasper, the chrysolite, and the onyx, and the beryl, the sapphire, and the carbuncle, and the emerald."<sup>(17)</sup> These gems, out of which Lucifer's diadem was made, signifying the characteristic virtues of the nine choirs of angels. Why then, when he fell from heaven, is he called a cherub? Because charity, the characteristic virtue of the seraphim, was not the occasion of his ruin, but wisdom, which is characteristic of the cherubim. And perhaps this may be the reason why, in enumerating the gems which adorned his crown, the last place is not given to the carbuncle, the symbol of charity, and the proper virtue of the seraphim, but to the emerald, the symbol of wisdom, the virtue of the cherubim.

It will help exceedingly to foster diligence in the scholastics, if superiors assist eagerly and cheerfully at their literary exercises: for if the superior regard a few hours spent in hearing them as useless trouble and loss of time, much more will the subject consider it lost labor to spend months and years in perfecting himself in these studies. On the other hand superiors should show themselves inclined and even anxious to take away from their studies those who neglect them. Let them bear in mind that it is a false pity to foster and cultivate laziness, and to waste the revenues of houses, contrary to the manifest wish of the founders.

And here, as I have made mention of founders, let me take oc-

<sup>(16)</sup> Ezech. xxviii. 10.

<sup>(17)</sup> Ezech. xxviii. 13.

casation, in a few words, to urge upon Ours as earnestly as I can the duty of gratitude towards benefactors, on which our Blessed Father insisted so much. I should certainly regret very much to find any superior, who, while showing all manner of attention to some one from whom he hoped to receive a benefit, would neglect many who had already showered benefits upon us. I wish, however, to remind all that in showing their gratitude they should have regard to what is right and decorous, and not humor the preposterous demands of some individual. For example, a superior should be called ungrateful rather than grateful, who would try to compensate the donations conferred by one of Ours, by giving him liberties repugnant to his state: just as a physician could not be accounted truly grateful who in return for a very large fee, would grant the patient what is injurious.

As our scholastics exercise the function of Masters in colleges, let us consider the ideal according to which our holy Architect wished pillars of such importance to be formed. He requires that the Masters should be men from whom the pupils "may imbibe letters and good morals at the same time." The construction and beauty of our whole edifice depend much upon the execution of this portion, according to the exact pattern prescribed. Those cities which call for the Society, and erect colleges at great expense, do it for the express purpose of engaging, as it were, so many public guardians of youth, who will imbue their minds with learning and instil morality into their souls. For almost the whole prosperity of the state depends upon the proper education of youth. The Society has devoted itself to this work for many years, with such fruit that a well-founded esteem has grown up in the minds of men, far and wide over the Christian world.

Although the higher studies are not usually taught by scholastics, but by the Professed, nevertheless, since we are treating of the schools, I think it well to say in one place all that I have to say on this subject. In providing Masters for schools of grammar, an exquisite choice, as far as learning is concerned, is not very necessary, nor is it possible; since such schools demand a



large number of good teachers rather than persons distinguished for talents. But in providing professors for the higher branches, superiors would be gravely at fault, if, instead of appointing those who are most eminent, in preference to all others, they follow the received custom of prerogative of age, either from the annoyance and trouble of inquiry, or through fear of vain complaints; since age ought never be the principal consideration in any ministry at all, but especially where talent is in question, unless there be equality of merit. In choosing men for these higher studies we must attend chiefly to what is of foremost importance, namely that these literary occupations are not allotted as a reward for services, nor as a favor by way of solace to some individual, but they are to be assigned according to the talents which the man possesses, and according to the common good, which can be helped by his services. A sense of gratitude requires this of us, and the fidelity we owe to the state for the confidence it reposes in us, in leaving to the Society entire freedom in its choice of men. Wherefore, he is not to be preferred who has taught longest, but he who is best fitted for teaching. Furthermore, since our studies are directed to the glory of God and the service of the Church, those who strive to teach the truth are to be preferred to those who advance novelties, which, being in opposition to ancient tradition, are absolutely to be avoided by us as seeds of disturbance. In this connection, with our holy Father, I recommend especially to Ours a diligent and devoted study of the two great masters, Aristotle in philosophy and St. Thomas Aquinas in theology. If one of Ours were to depart from the fundamental principles of these men, he would exhibit shallowness of mind, or at least, presumption.

Rhetoric and humanities are to be held in no less esteem, if we wish to follow the ordinations and injunctions of our holy Founder and of our early fathers. Many states look to us for this sort of treasure above all others, for it is admirably suited to rebut the artful, elusive style of the heretics. Wherefore let not superiors imagine that men of eminent ability, who are even fitted for higher

studies, are wasting and losing those talents, when they apply themselves to the teaching of Belles Lettres.

Our holy Father, in the fifth and following parts of the Constitutions, distributes this celestial militia, now well-equipped, into different battalions, grades, and offices, truly angelic. Nay more, in this temple erected to the divine glory, he delineates, in the faithful and constant observance of the four solemn vows of the professed, the four parts as it were of a great cross. And in each of the four vows, all of which are common to every grade of the Society in a greater or less degree, he holds up the angels as models. In chastity he requires us "to strive to imitate angelical purity in cleanness of both body and mind." In poverty, which makes all things common, we despoil ourselves of all dominion of earthly goods, and thus become spiritual and unencumbered, like the angels. It befits us, therefore, after the manner of angels, to devote ourselves ceaselessly to the working for the good of others, and never to accept any reward from them. In obedience, St. Ignatius exacts obedience of intellect, will, execution and such as the angels observe towards their God. While engaged in the harvest of souls on the missions he urges us to take the wings of the angels, alacrity and zeal. O incomparable beauty, which human hand has never perfectly painted! Angels with human attributes! Men fashioned by the Society after the image of angels!

But who is to supervise and direct the work and to prepare material for it, when nature has provided no material suitable for this work, a work above nature. In general, he who holds the place of God will find it very useful for the spurring and animating of his angels to use those warnings which the Apostle St. John used for the same end with his angels. In the case of purity, let him have recourse to the two warnings of Christ to the angel of the church of Sardis, the one of fear, "I will come to thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come to thee;" the other of hope, "He that shall overcome, shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father and before His

angels." (18) For the cultivation of poverty and self-abnegation, let him suggest what was said to the angel of the church of Smyrna : " I know thy tribulation and thy poverty, but thou art rich." (19) For prompt obedience let him urge the words which St. John addressed to Blessed Carpus, the angel and bishop of Thyatira : " These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like to a flame of fire, and his feet are like to fine brass. I know thy works, and thy faith and thy charity and thy ministry and thy patience and thy last works which are more than the former." (20) To those who pass their life in continual trial and hardship, in missions to the infidel, let him write what St. John, in Christ's name, wrote to the angel of the church of Pergamus : " I know where thou dwellest, where the seat of satan is, and thou holdest fast my name and hast not denied my faith." (21)

But besides the encouragement and consolation which the superior gives to all, by interesting himself personally in all the doings of his subjects, and pledging to them with certainty, as God's representative, a divine reward for their labors, he should also make use of certain special means which our holy Founder has included in his perfect plan in the Constitutions. And in regard to purity, that method should be followed which a certain legislator in olden times ordained in regard to parricide. He believed no penalty should be imposed, lest by so doing he would admit the possibility of such a crime. Nevertheless, as God makes it manifest that this virtue is beyond our natural strength, and on the other hand as we know that any, even the slightest defect in this most brilliant diamond of the Society would depreciate its value beyond all calculation, I shall recommend two means which our holy Father has left us as proper to preserve it.

The first is to foster in subjects the humble fear of losing it, which is always the surest safeguard of precious treasures. Nor is there any reason why we should be ashamed of such fear. Nay, rather, we should glory in it, imitating in this the most holy men in the Church. It is noteworthy, also, that even the greatest of

(18) Apoc. iii. 3. 5.

(19) Apoc. ii. 9.

(20) Apoc. ii. 18.

(21) Apoc. ii. 13.



pagan heroes lauded by profane writers, though in all other respects fearlessly confident, nevertheless trembled lest they should be shipwrecked on this shoal. This fear alone will make us careful to guard against occasions of falling, and will make us esteem the rules of modesty as a sure defence of chastity. And let no one of the Society, which is, as it were, on a stage of this world's theatre, account it an insult or want of confidence that the Society exercises this constant care and watchfulness over all her sons, even the most distinguished, but rather let us rejoice in it as our protection and glory. The man who would see a personal injury in the course pursued by the Society, would be like the feverish patient who accounts it an injury and gets angry, because his physician does not permit him to drink a cup of poison.

The second means is that subjects be encouraged to confide in the superior, and to make their account of conscience with sincerity. This practice is so peculiarly our own that the Fifth General Congregation declared it one of the substantials of our Institute. But that the subject may have confidence in manifestation, four qualities are requisite in the Superior. The first is love, which gently impels one to confide his secrets to another. Everyone is quite prone to make a confidant of a friend, while he will be unwilling to open his heart to a judge. The second quality is patience in listening, for he who shows signs of impatience to end the interview, even though he bids you speak, in reality invites you to say no more. The third is encouragement, for since the declaration of one's faults is naturally a bitter medicine, it will never be resorted to, unless the medicine be sweetened beforehand by the hope of restored health. The last quality is secrecy, which is so necessary and so intimately connected with the obligation of manifestation, that many theologians declare the obligation of the seal of confession to be not merely a positive precept, but a natural obligation.

What is related by Cassian is well known. He said that he believed that all the difficulty in manifesting themselves, which some good monks experienced, arose from the imprudence of a certain superior, who very improperly reprehended an erring subject for a

fault manifested by the subject under secrecy. I wish, for my part, to declare and manifest my mind clearly on this matter once for all. If I should ever hear that any superior has violated his trust, and instead of acting the part of a good physician in his treatment of the wound laid bare to him, has followed a course diametrically opposite, either by revealing the secret or by turning the knowledge acquired in manifestation to any other use than the private good of the subject, I declare once for all that I shall do what I believe to be my duty, which will be, to inflict a penalty not easily to be forgotten, and to make the matter so public that subjects will in future be inspired with confidence, by reason of the punishment, rather than deterred by the memory of the violated secret. I wish the same thing to be understood in regard to letters, which according to rule are to be read by superiors. As faults of this kind are ruinous to public confidence, I shall accept no excuse whatever, even though it be a case of thoughtlessness, and the matter be of light moment.

To what I have said on purity I shall now add some points on poverty. The essence of poverty consists in having nothing as our own private property and in being gladly content with the lot of poor men in things granted us for our use. The first condition is less hard, since the privation it causes does not consist so much in actual want, as in detachment of the will; but the second is harder, as nature suffers some inconvenience and annoyance from it. There are two things however which soften and diminish this difficulty. One is the example of superiors and of those fathers who are more eminent. These ought to call to mind how David slaked the thirst of his whole army, by rejecting the cup of water which had been offered to him. The other thing is a diligent care that each one, as far as possible, be supplied with everything necessary, and even useful. For one who is provided with necessities will more readily suffer himself to be deprived of superfluities. Wherefore that holy measure of strict exactness, which our holy Father has pointed out, is always to be observed; "Let each one, rejecting

all superfluities, be content with whatever shall be given from the common source for necessity and utility."

I know that self-love sometimes deludes persons into the belief that what is really superfluous is necessary; but we have every reason to expect, with as much certainty as can be had in human affairs, that the community will be satisfied that it has enough and more, even with the meagre provision of poor food and clothing, if the following prescriptions of our rules be carried out. First of all, what is furnished the community should be of good quality, healthful, and given with the hand of charity. It is a false economy for superiors, instead of devoting proper care to temporal concerns and instead of attending to the cultivation of the fields and the opportune provision of things, to try to compensate for their own sloth, by dealing parsimoniously and stingily with subjects, even refusing them what religion decrees to them and what nature demands. This is not the mind of our holy Founder. On the contrary he desires that the manner of food and all things necessary and useful "should not be different from what the physician of the place in which Ours live shall judge expedient."

In the second place it is necessary to show a little indulgence to the needs of those more advanced in years, especially those who deserve well of the Society, and who have spent their life and their health nobly in its service; who still promote its interests and help it very much by example and counsel, and who at the same time do not seek any indulgence nor any exemption not in keeping with their state. Not to show this consideration would be a great defect of charity and gratitude, and at the same time a means of deterring others from labor, for they will be led to suspect that the reason why superiors do not provide for the good of each one, according to his needs, is either because they want to escape the annoyance of imposing the task of caring for the aged upon those of their subjects who ought to do it, or because they wish to avoid some slight expense. And let not these superiors excuse themselves to me on the plea that what they give to one individual, out of the common order, makes many imagine that they have the same need.



This danger did not hinder our holy Father from prescribing in the Constitutions that, "In particular cases, if more or less shall be necessary, according to circumstances of persons, it shall be left to the discretion of those who are placed over them to provide as shall seem convenient." As a matter of fact it is not hard to distinguish between those, who, far from all semblance of sensuality, ask merely for what their health demands, and those others, who, seeking always their greater comfort, even reject what is more healthful, if it happens to be less agreeable and less according to their palate, and who in general do not restrain themselves from injurious indulgence. Again these superiors, of whom I have been speaking, sometimes allege the poverty of their colleges in defence of their stinginess, but this excuse is worthless, since they could easily reduce other expenses much less necessary. Wherefore they deserve severe reprehension, if to erect new chapels or new buildings, they curtail the food of those to whom the words of the Apostle are applicable, "You are the temple of God, and the spirit of God dwelleth in you."<sup>(22)</sup>

The holocaust of one's liberty is far greater than that of the body and all external goods, not only because it is much nobler, but because in it alone, as being supreme mistress, is contained whatever is of value in all other offerings. For this reason, St. Thomas, when comparing the religious vows, gives the first place to obedience. For he regards it of greater importance that a religious order should excel in obedience rather than in the two other vows, since it is the most efficacious instrument and the one which tends most directly to the universal end of the religious life. Therefore our holy Father, desiring us to reach the very highest perfection, has taken all possible means to have the Society eminent in this virtue, which begets security of conscience, is a bond of union, directs and unites all our forces in one aim, and, finally, makes all the members of the Society fit workers for the most arduous undertakings for God's glory. No more perfect form of obedience can

<sup>(22)</sup> I. Cor. iii. 16.

be conceived than that which our holy Father has marked out for us.

Its execution is in consequence difficult for all, but especially for superiors. For men of little discernment fancy that while the Superior is striving to preserve the integrity of obedience, he is merely working in the interest of his own authority and personal reputation. There are few sufficiently clear-sighted and unprejudiced to understand that the observance of obedience is insisted on most of all by those very superiors who have a repugnance for superiority and who would prefer to be under obedience rather than to rule others. Again, few seem to understand that what superiors command redounds in no way at all to their own personal advantage, but only to the benefit of the community, that is, of those who carry out what is ordered; finally, few understand that common life, of its very nature, requires that from time to time some should be appointed whom the others are obliged by rule to obey, and in consequence they do not understand that the more exact the obedience is, the happier the community life. As these reasons, however, are beyond the mental reach of the majority, we shall suggest two means which are very effective in fostering obedience, and which are within the grasp of all.

The first is, that superiors show themselves impartial, attached to no particular individual, ardent in charity, moderate and cautious in word and deed, and that they make clear to all that they have no other aim than the good of their subjects. Such conduct creates confidence and love in the subjects and inclines them to regard the superior as a man of prudence. When thus disposed towards the superior, even if they happen to doubt of his prudence, they know, however, that subjects are prudent in obeying even an imprudent command, while on the other hand, as they love the superior they willingly submit themselves and obey his will.

The second means is, that the superior treat the obedient with more kindness and gentleness, and if they have to endure hardship beyond the others for a short time, at least let them not have to

wait long for compensation. I confess such hope of reward is altogether unnecessary for the more perfect, who look to God alone for the reward of their deeds ; but as all do not reach this height of perfection, this manner of acting serves as a spur and encouragement. It is for this reason that in all communities, even the holiest, punishment and reward, according to desert, are made use of. The former, like medicine, restores health at the expense of pain, while the latter, like food, is an agreeable nourishment, and on this account is better calculated to foster union, as well as the observance of rules.

In the last place, the solemn vow in regard to missions is peculiar to the Society, and it is distinct from and surpasses the other vows, just as the power of reproduction, peculiar to living beings, surpasses the power of self-conservation which exists even in inanimate beings. It is to this ministry that the angels in heaven, owe their name, and the apostles on earth theirs. Nay, more it is an attribute of the Three Divine Persons. It includes all zeal for souls, displayed in preaching, in teaching catechism, in directing sodalities, and in similar ministries. This part of our edifice has been so admirably traced out by our Architect, that it seems to comprehend the foundation and pinnacle, as it were, of our temple, and all the other parts seem subordinated to this one. But as the highest ideals are the most difficult to realize, so this noblest of ministries is the most difficult of all that the superiors have to conduct. They do not satisfy their obligations by keeping their subjects from evil, which would be quite enough to hope from the majority of mortals, but they must strain every nerve to procure at all times the greatest good of those subject to them. Hence it is that superiors must be men of immense zeal, fighting untiringly and with their whole heart under our standard and watchword : *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*.

Let them not neglect the demands of the missions, merely to escape the trouble of a new distribution of subjects in the colleges, or the expense of providing necessities for the journey ; let them not, to satisfy the desires of individuals, abandon sodalities to the



care of such as are unfit, and incapable of producing any good ; let them not, through that faintheartedness which fears to command any except the weaker member, engage in the teaching of Christian Doctrine and similar works young men, who are occupied in their studies, instead of those who have taken their last vows and who are bound to this ministry by a special vow ; finally, let them not, through indifference to the distant future and to fruits which will mature only in the time of their successors, neglect to cultivate talents for preaching which will begin to show themselves in the young men, for this ministry is one of the most excellent and important in the Church. It may happen from this neglect of preaching that men of great ability will despise this art, or wandering blindly from the right path they will persuade themselves that eminence in it consists not in convincing the minds of the bearers by argument and sound reasoning, and in moving and impelling the will to action, but in a vain show of erudition and in glibness of speech. St. Jerome says of the Christian preacher : " Let him learn of the true David to wrest the sword from the hand of the enemy and to cut off the head of the haughty Goliath with his own weapon." May God avert from His Society that she should ever profane this sublime ministry and betray His Church, or that other than apostles should ever ascend the apostolic pulpit. Perhaps, with St. Jerome, a preacher may think that it is proper to associate profane science with things sacred, and that the doors of Christ's temples are not to be closed altogether to such science. If so, at least let him take care before bringing in this Ammonite or Moabite, as the same Saint calls it, to shave the head and cut the nails and change the vesture. Here are his words, " If you love the bond-woman, that is, profane science, cut off her bewitching tresses, and strip her of the adornments of words together with the lifeless nails."

I shall end this letter by suggesting a point, applicable alike to myself and to all of those whom God has appointed to help me in the burden of my office. It is this. The Society will have such sons as we wish them to be and as we shall make them. And

while we now enjoy the fruit of the labors of former superiors, in the virtues of those with whom we live, surely we are bound in the same way to see to it that it be not for want of fostering culture on our part that our successors in their time reap a less fruitful harvest.

And now I wish to return to the subject of light, of which I spoke in the beginning, and which as St. Ambrose holds, is the first and chief ornament of every structure: "It is the light which sets off the other ornaments of the house." In the structure of the universe I find two kinds of light, one was created on the first day of the world's existence by the great Father of light, the other was added on the fourth day, and divided into several luminaries. In the spiritual fabric of our Society there is something similar. The first idea of our Society, which God inspired in the mind of our holy Father, is like to the first day's light. To the other luminaries correspond the virtues, works, and example of our first fathers and of their successors, who, by their lives, have rendered more brilliant and conspicuous the light of the first idea of our Constitutions. So that we can say in praise of them that the first divinely inspired light of the ideal has, by a most perfect realization, "gone on and increased even unto perfect day."

Origen who is the author of this thought has distinguished these two lights and these two days: "Blessed is he who is enlightened by the word of Jesus and by His wisdom, and who receives light from His doctrine; but after him he is blessed who serves the Lord in the daylight of the elders. And who are the elders but those who illumine our hearts and make the light of day to shine with us, by means of that participated light which they have within themselves?" As if he had said that the doctrine and teaching of Jesus, or rather the outline of His doctrine and teaching, is as light to us, the first day's light; but that the example and living practice of this teaching, shining forth in our forefathers as so many luminaries, have created in us a second day brighter and purer than the first. Origen also well remarks that the cause of a more exact observance of the law "in the days of the elders" was the

living example of their virtues, which is also true of our Society if we call the days of the elders the age of our forefathers. "We must not pass over," he continues, "what is written; the people served the Lord all the days of Jesus and all the days of the elders." If you ask him what he means by those days. He will answer: "One day is justice, another prudence, another mercy; and so on through all the gifts of virtues, everything which pertains to virtue is the day of Jesus." Every virtue, by its light and practice, brings the true day of discipline into the Society, and the Society will be preserved in its integrity and in the perfect observance of rules, just so long and during so many days, as the example of virtue in the elders, and especially in superiors, shall endure, and just so long as this vivid light shall pass from them and illumine the younger members.

Would that I had the spirit of the Apostle St. Paul to give the final words of this letter such spiritual force, that I might impress upon your hearts the thought which he expressed with so much solemnity in his epistle to the Hebrews. He is speaking of the ancient tabernacle, which is renewed in us, but with greater magnificence and increase of divine glory and pondering seriously the words addressed to Moses: "When he was to finish the tabernacle: See (says he, that thou make all things according to the pattern which was shown thee on the mount,"<sup>(23)</sup> he takes occasion to compare the architecture and beauty of the new tabernacle raised by Christ, not with hands, and exalts it above the design and execution of the ancient one: "Now he hath obtained a better ministry, by how much also he is a meditator of a better testament. For if that former had been faultless, there should not indeed a place have been sought for a second."<sup>(24)</sup> The place that has been sought for this tabernacle is no other than our heart. St. Paul then adds that the mere shadow of this tabernacle is to be preferred even to the light of the former one; because the light and structure of the ancient "are but a pattern and shadow of the heavenly things."

What are the Apostle's conclusions? First, he shows how supe-

<sup>(23)</sup> Heb. viii. 5.

<sup>(24)</sup> Heb. viii. 6, 7.



rriors ought to direct this new work and give their utmost energy to it, and how they should labor to polish the living stones of Christ : "I will give my laws into their mind, and in their heart will I write them," saith the Lord. <sup>(25)</sup> Then the Apostle shows how holy and full of the spirit of God should be the man presiding over this work, since he has been designated by God as "the minister of Saints and of the true Tabernacle, which the Lord hath established and not man." Finally, the Apostle shows what the overseers of this structure ought chiefly to be on their guard lest it gradually fall to pieces. In conclusion he says, "that which groweth old is near its end and decayeth." <sup>(26)</sup> I pray that the divine mercy may never permit a work dedicated to the service of His Majesty to fall a victim to this perilous defect. And may He never allow the Society, which He has willed to do battle under the standard of His name, to lose its zeal and generosity in laboring in the sweat of its brow and in pouring its life-blood for the boundless spread of His glory.

The Servant of all in Christ,

FRANCIS PICCOLOMINI.

*Rome,*

*October 28, 1650.*

<sup>(25)</sup> Heb. viii. 10.

<sup>(26)</sup> Heb. viii. 13.

**X.**

A LETTER OF VERY REV. FATHER GOSWIN NICKEL, TO THE  
FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY ON THE LOVE AND  
PURSUIT OF PERFECT POVERTY.

Those who have hitherto been called to govern the Society, no sooner beheld it from that vantage ground to which God had summoned them, than they ardently desired to visit every place and address personally all their brethren. And this to discharge their duty and console their subjects; but, furthermore, by exhortation and counsel to repair any evils that may have been caused by the carelessness of Superiors, by the stealthy entrance of remissness into our midst, or by Satan's wiles and violence. Thus could they yield up to their successors, safe and sound the charge which they received from their predecessors. But as the greater good of the body demanded, that the Superior should remain at his post and govern, there was no alternative but to send to the whole Society letters which would represent their person and exhort all, if not by the spoken, at least by the written word, to the pursuit of perfection. For this vicarious visit would fan into a brighter flame the fire of the spirit, or quicken it if it were dying. And I have thought it well that I should do the same, and tread with scrupulous care in the footsteps of those, of whom I am last, not so much in number as in worth. And after I had thought long and seriously what was most necessary for the Society in its present condition, I finally concluded that I could do nothing more helpful to common discipline and more pleasing to God and our holy Father, than to incite you to the love and pursuit of perfect poverty, as far as the nature of our Institute demands. And though the other virtues, which make up the religious life, cannot be extolled too highly, however often their praises be repeated, still, it seemed due to poverty that I should choose it before others on this occasion, for the reason that, though not forgotten by those who have preceded me, it seemed to be left to the consideration of later

Generals. And our care for its safety should be more zealous, since many, deceived I know not how, seem to think it less exposed to danger than the other two vows. Hence, while it is reckoned secure and is carelessly protected, the peril that accompanies assaults against it is increased. Therefore the great St. Francis wisely answered those, who wondered that he was almost exclusively employed in vindicating and strengthening poverty, by explaining that he had to guard more zealously that virtue, which others deemed free from danger. For Superiors insist on the obedience of their subjects all the more strongly, because by it they can advance the common good and their own private interests. Again, every one realizes that the brightness of chastity is as delicate as it is beautiful, and, like a polished mirror, is tarnished and blemished by the faintest breath. Now, although the whole Society, in General Congregations, has made several Ordinations with regard to poverty, as opportunity offered, still, since these Ordinations may be looked on by some as touching the necessity of poverty rather than the perfection of its practice, there yet remains the consideration of poverty from this standpoint, that all may understand that members of our Society should advance in poverty, as in obedience and chastity, as far as the virtues themselves extend. And this is abundantly proved by reason and the example of those, who, in a prudent and ordinate manner, have entered the path of evangelical perfection.

We should recall to mind, that the Divine Majesty, in calling us to the Society of His Son, held out to each of us the same end, which He ordained for the whole Order. That is, we are to apply ourselves not only to the salvation and perfection of our own souls with the divine grace, but with the same to labor strenuously for the salvation and perfection of our neighbor. To secure this end more readily the three vows of Obedience, Poverty, and Chastity are made. And by this ruling of our Constitution is clearly defined the aim of an apostolic vocation; namely, that our poverty, as well as our obedience and chastity, include in their nature and extent whatever aids in securing our own perfection and our neigh-



bor's salvation. And who is so ignorant and so backward in this school of religious training, as not to see at once that we speak not here of that poverty against which one could offend and yet keep the vow of poverty inviolate? Nay, rather there is question of a perfect poverty, both in deed and in affection, in great things and in small. In very truth as is quite patent, it is one thing not to be bad, another to be very good, or, at least, to strive ever more and more for what is highest and best in virtue.

And in speaking about improving our own souls, let us keep in mind the wise counsel of St. Gregory of Nyssa: For him who would climb the heights of holiness the first step is to leave the level plain. This was the mystery which Jacob saw in a dream after he had left his father's house. He saw a ladder reaching from heaven to earth, and by it is meant that we can rise from our dead selves to the companionship of a heavenly and divine life. And it is vain to flatter oneself of an ascent to higher things, if even one foot touches the ground. The whole journey as yet lies before him; and though he may stand at the foot and gaze at perfection, and sigh for it afar off with listless longings, still he can never reach it. For in the evangelical life, on this ladder of religious progress, by which one climbs from virtue to virtue, how long a way, how many rounds must be passed even by those, who have through the vow of voluntary poverty, stripped themselves wholly of all earthly things! And the following are the words of St. Paulinus, of whom St. Augustine bears testimony that leaving a life of opulence he became poor for Christ's sake and reached a high degree of sanctity. "The leaving, or the total abandonment of the goods of this life, is not the end of the race but the beginning; it is not the goal, but the starting point. For the athlete does not win, when he strips for the contest; since his purpose in this is to begin the struggle; and, when he has striven lawfully, will he receive the crown." Now if this be the teaching of St. Paulinus, and without question it is the doctrine inculcated by this saintly man and master of evangelical poverty, not so much by word, as in deed and in truth, let our athletes look to it and see how nearly they

are to the crown, before they have divested themselves of all, that they may enter the contest. Let them see how far from the goal they still are ; for hindered by the weight of earthly things they have never made themselves ready enough for the race. You remember when the Son of God described in the Sermon on the Mount, that heavenly and blessed, yea, and eight times blessed form of religious life, He put poverty of spirit in the first place and at the threshold of the palace, to teach those longing to enter the secret sanctuary of holiness, to surrender themselves stripped of all things to poverty. And, that they could never enter that palace, as long as their hearts hungered for the husks of this world. For if, as St. Augustine well observes, " the love of earthly things is bird-lime to the wings of the spirit ; lo, you desired, and you are held fast." Do they not cling to the threshold of religious life, as though caught by bird-lime, not to say by mire, who so love their earthly goods, as never wholly to abandon them ; or, which is far worse, seek again what they once relinquished, as if, after many years and, perhaps, many labors in the house of the Lord, they repented of entering religion, and lack not the desire, but the ability to return to the world ? Hence, that first law of the evangelical life, so often insisted on by Christ our Lord, though binding all, still applies especially to us : that whoever wish to follow Him, must first determine on this : to renounce all things, abandon all things, yea, even themselves. And He adds that those who do otherwise are neither His disciples, nor worthy of His companionship. Thus laying the sickle to our heart, in the words of St. Ambrose, with a single stroke He cuts down the rank growth of earthly yearnings, before planting therein the divine seed of perfect charity, whose fruitfulness will be measured by the absence from our hearts of all worldly longings.

And let no one flatter himself with the vain thought, that what he uses for ornament, for pleasure, or for comfort, is too slight and, therefore, cannot be a violation of poverty ; that our poverty admits of a high, a middle, and a low degree, in any one of which one can remain, and still practise virtue ; that what is not best,

does not become straightway evil ; that for us, who do not live in woods and caves, as did the anchorets of old, a style of living somewhat more refined is far from unbecoming, and is not at variance with the common and ordinary life, which we profess and really lead. I would ask, first of all, those who reason thus and distort a semblance of truth into fallacy, whether, when they vowed themselves and all they had unto God, they reserved for themselves, by way of exception, some part of the whole, however slight and insignificant. And the conscience of each one will answer with a strong denial. For who brought not with him a heart pure and free from love and longing for perishable things, and offered it to God when he left a father's and mother's love and entered the Society with the aim of enriching himself with the goods of heaven, since then nothing earthly could longer claim him for its own? Yet why do we allow ourselves to be driven back from principles to forget the lessons we had long since learned so well, and to do violence to the Gospel, as Cassian says, when we no longer deem it necessary to the poverty we profess and to the integrity of the vow by which we have bound ourselves, to divest ourselves of all things and renounce even what is most trivial? And because the things we busy ourselves in securing and using are slight and trifling, it follows not that they do but slight and trifling mischief to the soul. For there are some in this school of truth and light whose eyes are so hopelessly affected, that they perceive nothing but the beam in their eye, and as the motes do not shut out all the light they never try to rid their eyes of them. And of this fault those, also, are guilty, who possess a host of useless trifles, yet count them as nothing, because though they are not few, still are not of great value. True, they are not rich, when compared with the rich of this world, but they do not realize that they belong not to the poor of Christ. And while trying to refute the charge brought against them of rapine in a holocaust, so offensive in God's sight, by the plea that the objects they withhold are valueless, it is strange they do not perceive, that instead of defenders they are their own accusers. For is it not shameful that



these cheap and empty nothings are dearer to them than the sublime and ennobling love of God, that love which begets all holiness and is a treasure beyond compare. In vain have they been taught by the merchant in the Gospel to spend all in buying that priceless pearl, which is the combined value of all things. Moreover, how pitiful a thing it is, that those who possess great things, should become the possession of what is small ! For, as St. Cyprian well teaches, we hold not, but are held, if our property wields so strong a sway over our hearts, as to hinder our abandonment of it, though to do so would be most pleasing to God, and strictly necessary for religious perfection. Besides, since the close and frequent companion of poverty, if not its sole and inseparable one, is necessity, we can readily understand how patiently and joyously those persons will bear the privation of necessities, who so stubbornly wish an abundance of superfluities.

And while these thoughts cross my mind, there arises the recollection of some, I regretfully confess, who, shrewd to their own unhappiness and others' harm, are so adroit in making plans whereby poverty can be made easy beyond all limits of right and justice. They introduce among us the schemes of others, and teach that certain questionable and highly dangerous actions are lawful, as long as the obligation of poverty and the vow remains intact and secure. They scatter these principles among those who are ignorant of such matters, adding with so much assurance that, these good simple souls lacking the clear perception necessary for casuistic subtleties are often deceived and become scrupulous where their fears are groundless, and even sin because they do what they think wrong, whereas, in reality, the opinion of learned men, whose office it is to treat of these matters of conscience, would allow the action to be done with good conscience and without the slightest shadow of fault. Nothing more baneful can be imagined than such a piety. For, as opinions of this kind do not wholly lack a semblance of probability, is it, think you, worth while to disseminate them, that the mistakes and scruples of a few may be thrust upon many ? And all are not so stupid as not to see clearly enough

how unsafe their guide is who is leading them away from the straight and royal road, by bidding them to make little of those offences against poverty, which they hear defended by some lame reasoning. For they see in direct opposition to them, not only the express opinion of able men, but the Decrees of our Generals, who have banished far from the Society these fanciful and harmful opinions. Hence it happens, that not sure of the truth and fearful of error, they enter rather with boldness than confidence on a course, from which they recede afterwards when better judgment prevails. Then they condemn themselves for their rashness, because they fear, and with reason, too, that blind passion led them astray, and not the clear arguments upon which the dangerous opinion was founded. Thus many are led into error or doubt, with almost full knowledge of the case, by those who boasted the power of freeing them from scruples. The time of studies for them was labor lost, if they then learned, and now teach those things, of which, as St. Augustine says, "a humble ignorance is better than a haughty knowledge." But even granting that these teachings, whose aim is to lessen the rigor of poverty, are grounded on sufficiently strong reasons to make them probable, still it does not follow that they may be taught from the house-tops, since they do little good, and work great and lasting mischief. For as the persons who delight in and secure such exemptions and freedom from the obligation of their vows, are not among those who are zealous for discipline and perfection, but are the nerveless and tepid religious, whose ideal of virtue is merely the avoidance of sacrilege, will these, I ask, so restrain themselves as to go no further than the most exaggerated tolerance of their opinions will allow? Most decidedly not, if we can at all trust the testimony of the wise and the teachings of long experience. For as those who run from the mountain-top to its foot, cannot suddenly stay their descent or arrest their steps as quickly as they wish, but are hurried on, even against their will, by the force of their momentum, so those, who are borne along by the wildest of vagaries towards whatever they

fancy lawful, are carried often beyond the bounds of right into the realm of wrong, and thus while loving danger they perish in it.

What I have hitherto said regards individual losses. But what will befall the entire Order, if within it this chair of pestilence finds masters and pupils? Let no one imagine that license and open vice have shamefully broken into religious families, where the rigor of ancient discipline yet thrives. For, first of all, the holiness of the place banishes them afar; and, then, even if they have gained an entrance, Justice, the avenger of right and virtue, drives forth these vices with the same scourge she uses in punishing criminals. They enter stealthily and disguised. Then are they to be feared the more, since they deceive by the appearance of a good, or, at least, of a not unlawful action. At first, these vices tap faintly at the hearts of a few and are let in. They then steal through the unguarded gates of other hearts and so the number increases day by day, until the evil becomes so widespread that it seems easier to endure than to banish it, and then the whole Order, gazing on herself with bewilderment, sees that she is not now as she has been, for a glory has departed from her. Whoever is wasted by consumption, or any other deadly disease, breathes, it is true, and lives but a burden to himself and to others. But who would prefer thus to live with broken strength, and gasping for breath, if his will were the only condition of his enjoying sound and robust health? Yet why do we prefer that weak, feeble, and wasted poverty, with which the spirit can scarcely survive, and is wholly unable to perform a task that calls for strength and labor? And why do we not rather choose that other poverty, which is strong and sinewy, which can wrestle with the foe, without being thrown or held, for it is naked; which follows Christ not from afar, but walks in His footsteps; for it bears no burden, and thus shirks no toil; which can win the rich reward allotted to the poor of spirit, for it esteems not worldly above heavenly wealth?

But as enough has been said of those, whose excessively lax opinions violate the rights of poverty and relax discipline, it is but reasonable that we should examine now what holy and worthy



opinions of it were held by the Founder of our Order, "whose commands," as Nazianzen once said of the great Athanasius, "we should receive as the tables of Moses, since God Himself framed those laws, which" St. Ignatius "promulgated among us." First of all, he calls poverty the "bulwark" of the Society. And this not merely to signify that as cities are protected by bulwarks, so the Society is defended by poverty; but especially, as he proceeds to point out, because our enemy concentrates all his forces against it, and having once carried this position, all else can be overthrown without trouble. As a stronghold must be guarded against a two-fold foe, the besieger from without and the traitor within, lest the former throwing up breastworks and getting his guns in position batter down the walls with his breaching-batteries and thus put the defenders to rout; or the latter by a dastardly treacherous act throw open the gate to the enemy; so must we diligently guard poverty from our avowed enemy, the demons; but chiefly from our hidden and domestic enemy, that is, says our holy Father, from those, "who alter the wise ordinances of the first founders, by declarations and innovations wholly at variance with the pristine spirit." Hence he wished the interests of the Society to be protected against these men by a law which could never be repealed: namely, that "the Professed of the Society promise never to make any amendment to the Constitutions respecting poverty unless it be to make it stricter according as they judged right in our Lord and the circumstances of time demanded." Thus is poverty protected against the enemies of our own household. Now our holy Father, to complete his task, secures it from the foes without, by building over against them a rampart and wall and moat: forgetting nothing the while that seems of service in destroying self-love under the leadership of which all avarice does battle. And first of all, at the very outset he warns candidates for the Society, that "they must persuade themselves that the diet, apparel, and lodging shall be such as become poor men." Again: "that they ought to use nothing as their own; and may by no means lend or borrow, or dispose of anything in the house" And:

“they must be ready to beg from door to door.” And: “no one shall have anything in his own, or another’s keeping.” Furthermore, they must rest content with what is given for their needs or comfort out of the common stock, with a retrenchment of superfluities. They may accept no stipends, nay, not alms even, for any spiritual offices. Finally, he comprises all in the single word, to love poverty as “a mother.” By these and other means he girded poverty round about as with a strong wall, and cut off all the approaches on the side of self-love, than which nothing is more wily in fraud or stronger in assault. He was wont to say, moreover, that he alone was truly poor in spirit, who was so affected towards things given for his use, as to seem like a statue, which offers no resistance to prevent being despoiled of even the richest ornaments and attire. But not to pass by in silence incidents which have left such sweet memories of our dear Father’s life, what meant his constant prayer, his watchings far into the night, his floods of tears, the glimpses he caught of things divine, that largess of heavenly favors, the divine fires that consumed his soul, which scarce controlled itself in such intense emotion? What meant those other affections, which he himself recorded, that he might daily ponder the lessons which God taught him throughout the forty days he spent in prayer, when his sole aim was to discover with unerring certainty, whether Professed Houses, which are wholly supported by alms, should possess churches with even a slight revenue to meet the unavoidable expenses which would of necessity be entailed? These notes of our Founder’s life are yet extant. Divine Providence preserved them from destruction, else the great modesty of our Founder, ever on the alert to conceal his virtues would have destroyed them with the many others. And they remain not so much to exalt him, as poverty. For if he sought and obtained so much of the divine light, if he held such long and familiar converse with God, the Discerner of spirits, in order to decide wisely in a matter of no very great importance, if compared with other things, how many tears and prayers must we think it cost him to frame those laws and Constitutions mentioned above, which exact

from all alike a perfect abandonment of all things? How could he have made and sanctioned them, if not inspired from on high, and guided by a divine impulse? And he would have chosen a manner of life still more straitened in its poverty, had he not understood that the greater glory of the Divine Name demanded an interest not in our own salvation alone, but in that of our neighbor. Again, as it would have been ill-judged to disturb those engaged in study by making them beg from door to door, or to weaken by excessive poverty those wearied by daily labors, he wisely granted whatever was necessary for the purposes of this manner of life and for the endurance of toil. He so regulated community of property with individual goods, as to insure perfect poverty and get rid of all excesses, for he condemned as bordering on luxury whatever was superfluous.

I have advanced enough reasons in favor of perfect poverty drawn from the primary end of our Society. I come now to the secondary end of the Society, which is of an importance equally serious, if it be weighed thoughtfully and earnestly. It is zeal and charity in securing the salvation of our neighbor. Now as this is an Apostolic charge and duty, what can be brought forward first with greater fitness, than the lot and condition of the apostles? If we study them closely, we shall find them men of not only slender, but of no fortune at all, whose whole estate was their ship and nets; whose income was their daily fishing; whose food was plain and simple that it scarcely sufficed to support life from day to day; of rough and uncouth manners, and whose homes were poorly furnished, if furnished at all. Yet for these very reasons were they best fitted to discharge the apostolic ministry, if only they would abandon of their own accord that little which they had, and what was of highest moment, cast aside all anxious longings of laying up a store for the future. For God had most wisely ordained, that they should deal out to men the riches of heavenly treasures, who had no earthly wealth, neither money to acquire wealth, nor ownership to enjoy it. For how could the apostles have looked out into the face of the world, or what persuasion would their words have



carried if, when extolling the supremely higher worth of heavenly above the goods of earth, they shunned the inconveniences and disgrace of poverty and reached out with covetous hand for the wealth of the world, tearing down by a most destructive example what they endeavored to build up. On the contrary, it was rather due to God's steadfast bounty to men, that those, who in His name promised an eternity of bliss to men whose days are few, happiness to the wretched, and riches and a kingdom to the poor, should themselves first prove how little they thought of the fleeting treasures of this life, which men, through ignorance of heavenly blessings, look on as the only, or the highest good; and thus, while having nothing, they possess all things in the hope alone of what is to come. Hence it happened, that when Jesus, the Master of truth, was asked by the disciples sent by St. John, whether it was He Who was to come, or should they look for another, He bade them return and tell what they had heard and seen. And among the proofs He gave in testimony of His divine mission He pointed out as especially worthy of note that the poor had the Gospel preached to them, and by these St. Hilarius justly thought that the apostles were designated.

This is not the place to recount their deeds in spreading the Gospel, when they built up the empire of Christ, and laid the foundation of the Church throughout the world. Let it suffice to listen to Isaias, when, as he gazed from the heights of ecstasy at the scenes of the future, and with prophetic vision saw all the peoples of the earth bow to the yoke of Christ, and idolatry, the mother of every wickedness, and her offspring put to flight, burst forth into praise of such a miracle: "The foot shall tread it down, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy."<sup>(1)</sup> "That is," says St. Jerome, "the apostles will trample idolatry under their feet; for imitating Christ's poverty, they became sharers in His privileges." Hence, though the apostles went forth to preach the New Law adorned with God's richest gifts, still, these are passed over by Isaias, as if not worth mentioning, and the glory of having led

<sup>(1)</sup> Is. **xxvi.** 6.

the world captive is yielded to poverty alone. And this was but following the constant example, nay, rather the counsel and impulse of God, to the end, that those, whom He might afterwards call to the same Apostolic life, might understand how important for that work, before all other virtues, was the virtue of voluntary poverty. Now to put this still more clearly before you, I shall choose from the almost countless number of men illustrious for apostolic charity and their rich harvest of souls, but one or two examples.

The Albigensian heresy had just broken out. The city of Toulouse was infected. The poison of heresy and the horrors of war threatened fearful havoc and ruin. A strong hand was needed to crush the evil which was growing greater daily. The Holy Pontiff, therefore, despatched men of admirable wisdom and piety to the spot where religion was in danger. Though they labored long and earnestly as the crisis demanded, they were unsuccessful. Finally, the holy Patriarch St. Dominic, was sent, and he perceived that he must act far differently from those who had preceded him. He saw that favor and influence were to be gained, not by dignity of rank, not by the splendor of his retinue, nor by the rich trappings of an assumed royalty. Therefore he went among the heresy-infected people after the manner of the apostles, poorly clothed, on foot and begging his bread, and soon he succeeded in obtaining a result, which the Royal Prophet attributed to God: "He sent his word, and healed them: and delivered them from their destructions."<sup>(2)</sup> And it was afterwards easy to restore sound and whole to the Church, a member which had been corrupt. But if we wish for examples near at home, and hence more easily imitated, I shall present one before all others, but one that equals many, namely, of St. Francis Xavier, who was the first to open a way for the Indians to heaven, and for the Society into India. Wherever we look at him, we shall find him in all places a man of poverty and of apostolic charity, and of a poverty which contributed as much to the salvation of others, as it enhanced his own renown.

(2) Ps. cvi. 20.

He took this virtue as his companion at the very beginning of his journeyings. For when he left Rome and the embrace of his brethren, he took nothing with him but his breviary and the clothes he wore. Embarking for India, poverty was still his companion and took the place of all provision for the journey. He accepted none of the comforts supplied him for the journey by the Royal Commissioners, save some books and a cloak to shelter himself against the cold when rounding the Cape of Good Hope. He slept on the deck using the coils of rope for a pillow. His daily food was what he could beg. His clothes were old and threadbare and covered with patches, and he would have continued wearing these if the strategy of some of his friends did not remove them and leave new ones in their place. His shirts and shoes, though he usually went barefoot, were the gift of the soldiers on board the ship. He lodged at the public hospital, and when he lived with Ours at Goa, he lived on the food and drink he had begged. Now did this extreme poverty detract aught from the dignity of the faith or from Xavier's influence? Nay, on the contrary both gained greatly in favor and esteem. For, to pass over other instances, although poverty was branded as base and disgraceful by the Japanese, still they revered it in Xavier, and regarded it as a powerful argument in favor of the nobility of the Christian faith and law, which valued nothing but heaven and eternal things, and also to prove the sanctity of Xavier, who showed in his actions an image of the divine wisdom and heavenly life, which he preached. True our field of labor may not be as extensive and fertile as Xavier's, yet everyone in his own degree will have much to do in leading souls to God. To do this work well he has the footsteps of the Apostles to guide him, other saintly heroes so like the first followers of Christ, and our own fathers, too, whose holy and scrupulous imitation of the Apostles should be the models for us. There is a short but pithy saying of our holy Father, which vividly depicts the laborers of the Society. He used to say, that they should let but one foot rest on the earth, while the other should be lifted and ready to start whither obedience called. Now as often



as I recall this maxim, I recognize in it not only that alertness, with which we ought all stand having our loins girt about, and our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, but also that free-limbed and ever ready poverty, which is as necessary for those who stand with ready feet for the word of obedience as the weighed anchor and standing off from shore are to those who would put out to sea. For if to love temporal things, is to make our heart and its affections cleave to the earth, how entirely free we must be from all love and yearnings for earthly things, that we may be, as our calling requires, ready to labor at all hours, prepared to go about teaching, and take nothing for the way, neither scrip, nor bread, nor money in our purse. And surely this cannot be done by those, who, devoted more to the care of their own bodies than of their neighbors' souls, have not accustomed themselves to endure with a ready and cheerful spirit the straitened resources of the house, the narrowness of their room, the coarseness of their food, the hardness of their bed, and the other inconveniences of poverty. But those who have given up their souls for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, as Paul and Barnabas did, and as those do now, who copy closely the image and the practices of an apostolic life; these, I say, suffer the privation of even the necessities of life to carry through the world the tidings of the kingdom of God. Truly this is to seek not those things which are their own, but which belong to Jesus Christ; a virtue, alas, of but few, as Paul lamented even in that golden age of the infant Church.

Now, to follow the natural order of the subject, for in a thousand ways the devils strive to destroy our poverty, yet when they unite violence to their cunning they are more to be feared, as they do more harm when we have less fear. The most powerful of these, as far as I know, are two, propriety and necessity; words innocent enough, and hence better suited for purposes of deceit. And to speak first of propriety; there are some who confront us with the testimony of St. Bernard, who abhorred slovenliness even in poverty. An excellent sentiment truly, provided it be not distorted senselessly into a defence of luxury and unseemly daintiness, con-

trary to the author's intention. Why, forsooth, cannot poverty dwell in a hut, beneath a humble roof, and remain free from the untidiness and uncleanness, which are the effects of sloth and listlessness? Can it not be clothed with clean, though poor and common garments? Does its dignity suffer, if it trudges along in patched shoes? Poverty is not poverty's disgrace, but its glory; and it has no richer ornament than itself. Let only uncleanness be banished, which is the fault of carelessness, not of poverty. It is best adorned when unadorned; as real and natural beauty need not borrow the alluring resources of art to make it attractive. Hilarion, it is true, never washed the sackcloth he put on in the beginning: and he was wont to tell those who expressed surprise at it, that it was idle to look for cleanliness in sackcloth. However praiseworthy this was in Hilarion, it should be no argument against poverty; for this holy man led a hermit's life known to none save God and himself. However, we know even of solitaries, and those most renowned for holiness of life, who kept their garments of sackcloth becomingly neat. We, who lead a common life and mingle with men, must be careful of cleanliness. And here our holy Father, both by precept and example, rebukes the uncleanness of the slug-gish. For it is well known that nothing could have been added either to his poverty or cleanliness. Indeed, it is but becoming, that the appearance of the body as well as of the soul should be seemly, and that no spot or stain should be concealed within, nothing disordered or improper should appear without. For as St. Augustine says just as "in some works of art a lack of symmetry offends the eye," so the disordered exterior of an unrefined man is disgusting and repellent. And the slovenly neglect in manners and behavior that appears on the surface is a fair likeness of the disorder within. But whatever is over and above cleanliness and neatness should have in our eyes the appearance not of a virtue but of a defect. For it is not as unbecoming for men of the world to be plunged even into beggary, as for the poor of Christ to make a show of riches by affectation in dress and manners. Want,

in the case of the former, is the lot appointed them by fortune and necessity, and they bear it grudgingly ; whereas with us it is freely chosen by our vow, and is our proudest boast that the poorer we are the more we become like the King of kings, the Son of God.

But although, disguised under the name of propriety, vanity and pride can reach all of us, but more easily those who fill high positions, and others who often visit the homes of great. For it is a proof of rare, and hence, high virtue to keep one's footing on such slippery steps without falling headlong, nay, even to support those who totter and lift up those already fallen. The Society, it is true, has had, and will, I trust, have yet again many such men, who not only cause her no anxiety, but are a source of comfort to her, whom she sees on the fearful heights of a court safe from the dizziness of pride and secure against a fall. And in her joy she could employ the language of St. Ambrose, when he spoke of the mystical sense applied to the goats which dwell secure on the craggy heights of the mountains : " See how fearlessly that flock grazes on the mountain-peaks. Thus, where danger threatens others, there it finds its food ; there is sweeter nourishment, there a choicer herbage. Their keepers gaze on them hanging from the thicket-grown rock, where the wolves cannot ravage, where the trees are laden with rich fruit untasted by others. One can see their udders swollen with rich milk, wherewith to feed with motherly anxiety their tender offspring."

As the virtue of the men, of whom I spoke, is extraordinary, so also is their reputation. Nay, in their worth the whole Society gains the esteem and the enduring praise of men ; for in their persons the Society sits high on a throne in noon-day splendor before the gaze of the whole world. Hence the devil, with all his resources of force and skill, struggles desperately to cast them down from those virtuous heights, knowing full well that their ruin would be a common loss. Therefore must they strive more ardently, not to relax in the fixedness of their good resolves or in the rigorous observance of religious discipline ; because they do not stand or fall alone, for by their lives are their brethren judged. And



there are many habits, and serious ones, too, into which they can fall with as much peril as ease. Not to stray from the subject, it readily happens that those, who are wont to look on the brilliant grandeur of a court, see only the lowliness of pinching poverty when they turn their dazzled eyes on a religious house and in the light of this contrast despising everything round about them they think that when at home they are living in dirt and squalor, when with their own. Thus by degrees they shrink from poverty, and while their body stays at home, their spirit ever dwells in the court. Then they are deeply shamed, if whilst they are clothed in cheap and common garments, they fall in with princes and nobles clothed in purple and gold ; or if these latter visit their poor and humble cell, and see them furnished in no better manner than the others. Finally, they seek to have their brethren show them at home that consideration which their influence and authority command at court ; at least they desire to be distinguished from the others by a lordliness and luxury in their manner of life. And the change which has come over their palate and stomach since they were summoned to the courts of the great is truly magical ! For now their meals must be sent from the table of the palace to satisfy the cravings not of hunger but of pride. And so it happens, that the men, who by example and familiar intercourse should have introduced religious modesty into the court, have brought the ceremonies and daintiness of the court into a religious house. This conduct is the more perilous, if these persons become so eager in the defense of their position as to deem it a personal insult, if superiors determine to set bounds to this unbearable abuse ; but the evil escapes all control, if they brook no restraint, and defy correction. Hence, if there be any, who have become even slightly tainted with the vices of the court, let them ponder well how heedlessly, nay, how shamefully and disgracefully they have discharged their trust, if, to gain the shadow of a mighty name, they strive to win it by elegant manners, faultless attire and by other exquisite appointments denied the rest of the community. For in the eyes of sensible men, the contempt a religious shows for fame and riches, wins for him their veneration ; love and dis-

play of them excite their scorn. The renowned Patriarch of Ethiopia, and great light of our Society, Andrew Oviedo, a man not more illustrious for his rank, than for his noble virtues, eschewed all episcopal pomp when he went through the diocese of Evora administering the sacrament before his departure for India. Nay, with but one companion on his journey, and that one chosen from the Society, he drove before him an ass laden with the sacred vessels and pious books. And when Henry, Cardinal-Prince of Portugal, whose States Oviedo was traversing, heard of his conduct, he sent him a conveyance and servants, and with royal munificence added an abundance of whatever necessity or comfort demanded, bidding him receive the gifts and remember his rank, and make use of the gifts. But Oviedo touched nothing, and answered, as Xavier had done on a like occasion : that evangelical poverty brought not disgrace on a bishop, but honor ; nay, that favors, too largely bestowed, detracted from any dignity which christian lowliness and poverty increase and protect ; for they are its handmaids, not pomp and splendor. This was his reply ; not that he deemed all kind of magnificence a fault in princes of the Church, but because he followed the example of ancient bishops. And his conduct is the more praiseworthy, in as much as he was chosen Bishop and Patriarch, not from the court, but from the school of religious poverty. True, he was no longer bound by our laws,—but for us, who profess poverty in its entirety, he serves as our proud glory and boast, and a model for our imitation.

After propriety comes necessity, equally destructive of poverty, but far more harmful, as it is a more widespread evil. Yes, it is co-extensive even with self-love. For self-love wears the mask of a philosopher, but is in reality a sophist. Under the category of “necessity” it places everything that helps to make life comfortable, and even luxurious. To gain this end self-love stops at nothing. Here is the cause of depression, of melancholy, of daily petitions for the rights and needs of nature, as they put it, and of constant fault-finding of that furtive seeking out of means to satisfy not only the present, but with foresight, all future neces-

sity. Hence follow also a morbid anxiety in the choice of food and drink; an extravagant concern for health, that fears confining occupations and malarial sites, and is forever experimenting with some new health cure. But to omit these things for the present, let me speak to you of a necessity not without honor, which it is a mark of virtue to bear and suffer, though to shun it be not sin. Would that St. Bernard, if he looked from heaven down on us, could find no cause to repeat the reproach which when living he addressed to certain members of his own and of other Orders! "We see," he says, "certain poor men, who, if they were really poor, would not be so cowardly and downcast, for their poverty makes them kings, aye, kings of heaven. These are they, who wish to be poor, on condition they want for nothing. And they love poverty in order to endure no want." But those who have the necessaries of life, though there be no excess, still according to the Wise Man, as interpreted by Cajetan, cannot be classed deservedly among the poor. For he who petitions God thus: "give me neither beggary nor riches, give me only the necessities of life,"<sup>(3)</sup> while he compares and rejects the extremes, chooses what lies midway between the two. Plenty follows riches, necessity accompanies poverty; and a life made up of poverty and riches is a mingling of comfort and inconvenience. But those who lead such a life, vainly would have themselves classed among the poor of the Gospel; for they, on the contrary, despoil themselves willingly and give themselves over to the discomfort want brings with it. Nay, they take the cross on their shoulders and follow after Christ, rejoicing that they are deemed worthy to taste with Him the bitter fruits of the cross, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness. How much unalloyed pleasure is theirs, when on examining their rooms and themselves, they not only find nothing unnecessary, nothing in excess, but discover at times that real needs are not supplied! Then do they assuredly understand that they are truly poor in spirit, that is, in will; inasmuch as they love and suffer their neediness, and are unwilling to remove

(3) Prov. xxx. 8.



or lessen it, though they have the power to do so. They even cheerfully renounce whatever they think not wholly necessary for life, and would wish, as St. Gregory Nazianzen says of some, to possess nothing save the cross and their body. And among these, this great saint himself, who from a monk became a bishop, and as a bishop was more needy than any monk, speaks thus: "Why do they cast up to me my poverty, which is my wealth and riches? Would that I could strip myself of the rags that remain, and run naked through this life's thorns." Who have embraced poverty with such generous affection, as to desire, when occasion offers, to lack in very deed what is even needful to support life or to maintain respectability? With such men, what house is so needy, or possessed of such slender resources, that they will not prefer its poverty to luxury and plenty? And if, as sometimes happens, the scanty income and alms in some place fail to supply fully the necessities of life with what good will and cheerfulness do they not suffer this privation, as the object of their most fervent wishes. Yet while I speak thus to you, I trust my words will not be as idle, as is the language of love, which, according to St. Bernard, is strange and meaningless to those who love not. For, as all must admit, this consummate, evangelical perfection is none other than that which should adorn a religious, and which our holy Father St. Ignatius convinced himself would be universal in the Society. And the truth of this is seen in the letters which he sent to several colleges in Europe. As I quote his words for you they seem to be arrow flights of his fervent spirit from the ashes of his tomb; therefore, dear fathers and brothers, receive these words of his as though his own sacred hand sent them. "I have learned from many sources," he says, "that God our Lord has graciously visited you, and made you partakers of the fruits of holy poverty. I speak of the lack of certain temporal things, which were needful for preserving or regaining health, and for the body's well-being. And this, without question, should be considered no slight favor. For the divine bounty has granted you a share in that blessing, for which we should ever yearn, that, in accordance with the holy

Institute of the Society we have entered, and the vow which we have made, we make our lives like that of our Captain, Jesus Christ. And, as far as I know, there is no place in the whole Society which, through the bountiful gift of God, has not some share in this favor. But if we compare ourselves in this matter with our brethren in India, who tax body and soul to the utmost in their unwearied apostolic labors, who, at times, want the very necessities of life, who can hardly satisfy the cravings of hunger and thirst with rice and water, for in many places bread and wine cannot be had, and whose coarse and tattered garments are the coverings of bodies wasted by hardships, we shall regard our own sufferings as light, or, at any rate, as not insupportable. Let us picture India to our imagination, and that we dwell there, or let us fancy that it is India where we live, for it can be in any part of the world to aid in bearing hardships; and let us thus daily help ourselves to bear the burden of poverty." Thus St. Ignatius wrote to the Society of that time on the question of poverty. And it was well to repeat his words, not only, as was my purpose to listen to our blessed Father himself, but, also, to fill us with shame, if we, who enjoy greater comfort than was known in earlier times, bear with grudging spirit the trifling inconveniences of every day life when we should accept severe trials with light and joyous hearts.

Enough has been said for the present on the necessity of evangelical poverty and its obstacles. It remains for me to give some counsels, which will chiefly meet the needs of daily life, in gathering the ripe fruit of this good tree. For our holy Father St. Ignatius, who tells the advantages to be gained from the practice of this virtue, holds them out to us with the same hand, which wrote the Rules and Constitutions of the Society. And the first fruit this tree of poverty will be to use nothing as our own, a practice which of necessity must be his who realizes that he has nothing of his own, and what is more makes profession of it. "For what can they have of their own," is the striking remark of St. John Climacus, "who have surrendered their body," aye, and their

will and intellect, "to another's commands?" Now who can take it ill, if rightful authority deprive him at will of those things which do not belong to him and transfer them to another? The present life needs, it is true, certain things without which strength weakens and dies. Such are clothing, food, lodging, sleep, and things of that nature. But as vines and ivies are not supported by trees in the same way, so men have not the same need of the necessities and the comforts of life. For vines need the tree's support only to find air and be exposed to the sun. For the rest, their own sap feeds them; they bring forth fruit, and yield readily to the vine-dresser, if he wishes to take them from their place. But it is far otherwise with ivies, which wholly encircle the tree and rather bind it round with coils, than cling to it with tendrils. Then, too, their creepers rob the tree of its sap and climbing from the foot to the very topmost branch, they knit themselves so closely to the bark as to seem not another growth, but as though they were ingrafted into the tree. Nay, you may cut them but they will live. To keep them they must be stripped off the tree, a task at once dangerous and difficult. For this, as St. Bernard says, is not to rid the tree of a parasite, but to bark it. Again, the person who has renounced all, is not only deprived of ownership in things granted for his daily use, but he is forbidden to look on any place as his fixed residence. For what is more unbecoming a religious than to be so attached to one house or town as to make as much ado, when he is ordered elsewhere, as if a mountain received the command: "be thou removed, and be cast into the sea."<sup>(4)</sup> What more unworthy, again, than to be peevish and gloomy at having to dwell in poorer colleges, and to desire large cities and a wider field? Why, it would seem that only the places in which we live or wish to live, were nearer heaven and led to God by the shortest way. As a result the intervention of externs is sought, favors are extorted, and all but violence is done the Superiors in the entreaties urged on them. We at times fall so far below our former standard, that we wish to pass our years in one spot, though when

<sup>(4)</sup> Mark xi. 23.



novices we readily and cheerfully abandoned the world in its entirety, and perhaps begged most earnestly to be sent to missions in other lands. Yet the Apostle exclaims, that we have not here an abiding city, but look for another ; and that, whilst in this body, we are wayfarers separated from the Lord. And how much more forcibly these words apply to us who are not of the world ! Now what poor traveller, who is admitted for a short time into an inn, quarrels about his lodging, complains that his comfort and worth are not sufficiently considered, or is unwilling to set out, unless he be thrust out of doors ? Yet this is still more unbearable in us, who by our Institute and manner of life should be ready, as was St. Paul according to St. Chrysostom, to spread our pinions and fly to any part of the world ; to despise every toil and peril as though we were not made of flesh, and to scorn all earthly things since heaven is already ours.

But what, think you, should be said of those, who, in changing residence, take so many things along with them, that, to judge by their baggage, one would fancy that a household and not one man was moving. Men of this stamp are always fearful, lest religious poverty meet them on the threshold of the house to which they are sent, and show them to such a chamber as the Sunamitess made ready for Eliseus, where the whole furniture was a little bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick. Whatever be the road such men take, it is assuredly not the path of evangelical wisdom or virtue. " For the path of virtue," as Lactantius truly observes, " knows not those who are laden with many burdens. Straight is the way by which justice leads to heaven. And he only who is free and unencumbered can follow it ; for the wealthy are weighed down by their many riches, and tread the broad way of death." Fancy one of Ours laden with baggage meeting one of the old Society, to whom such trappings and baggage were unfamiliar. Picture to yourselves for example, that first-born of St. Ignatius in religion, Peter Faber, who sent back to Albert, Cardinal and Archbishop of Mayence, his splendid presents, and excused his action by saying that he belonged to the number of those, who

carry all their possessions with them. Confront, then, two such men. How deeply will each blush at the other, and for what different reasons ! Faber, at sight of the other having so much baggage ; the other at Faber whose riches were to possess nothing, as Nazianzen says of Basil. Let us, then, cast from us all such impediments, which are no less wearying than burdensome for those who would follow Christ along the steep way of virtue. And following the guidance of St. Hilary, "let us obtain an eternity of spiritual goods at the sacrifice of earthly ones." For it is much the same here, as, when on the high seas an overladen merchantman labors heavily in a storm, we advise throwing the cargo overboard, lest the vessel founder. Let us recall the practice, which from the Society's beginning our Fathers sanctioned by their example as a law for their posterity ; namely, that at fixed times we searchingly examine whatever we have for our use, and if we find anything not altogether necessary, be what it may, let us cast it from us, as we would lop off branches that cast a harmful shadow on the vine. Furthermore, to prevent in future any superfluities from entering our room, since we might wish to take them with us when we are sent to another house, let us station sentinels at the door of our rooms to prevent their entrance. The example of the robber chiefs Rechab and Baana here suggests itself. They struck off the head of Isboseth an innocent man of princely blood. For "the door-keeper of the house, who was cleaning wheat, was fallen asleep," and so left open a way to the assassins for the murder of her master. "For they struck him," says the Scripture, "and killed him ; and taking away his head, they went off by the way of the wilderness walking all night." <sup>(5)</sup> Here is an excellent lesson which clearly warns us, what danger threatens our soul, when the doorkeeper, which is regard for common discipline, and which should separate the wheat from the chaff, that is, necessities from superfluities, is not watchful in its toil, but yields to sloth and drowsiness, and leaves unguarded not merely the approaches,

(5) II. Kings iv. 7.

but the very entrances themselves through which the enemies of the soul can enter and murder the sleeping master.

In the third place we have to consider those, who spare neither labor nor money in buying books indiscriminately. And in this no slight mischief is done to poverty, for the unwary are entrapped the more readily, inasmuch as such dealing seems rather honorable, and eminently proper in a religious. Assuredly that is a fault against poverty if but few of the books are used, while many are piled up to be silent yet eloquent monuments to the wisdom of their possessor; again, if, instead of regarding them as common property one claim as his own, by some peculiar right, the books which his superiors allow him. No one, surely, is ignorant of the rules determining this matter; that as soon as anyone has bought a book, with permission, he fix on some house to which it shall belong, and put the name of the house or college, to which it has been given. And, when they are sent elsewhere, they can no more take these books with them, than those in the common library. Nor is their conduct altogether praiseworthy, who give to another college, the books secured for them by alms of devout persons, and thus deprive their present residence of what is almost its right.

Some allege charity as a pretext for collecting and keeping a host of trifles for the purpose of making presents to others. Death often overtakes them with these articles in their possession. They think they are not blameworthy, because, as they claim, they cannot be called the owners of things they keep for others. I make an exception in favor of Superiors; as it is right that they at times bestow some gift on those who have deserved well of the Society, and thus these presents are but tokens of gratitude. But when the favor or present carries not the blessing of virtue, there is no virtue in the religious who bestows it. For the poverty he avows, if it is evangelical, extends to a perfect despoilment of all things, which is as far from having the means of granting favors as it is from begging them, this poverty, I say, deems it not a shame, but a glory so to have so surrendered all to God, as to have nothing left to give to others. I do not forget that the Saints,



Jerome, Augustine, Paulinus, Severus, and other holy followers and teachers of the religious life and evangelical poverty, sent at times to their friends, especially if far away, pledges and tokens of charity and good-will. Yet they were so few, cheap, and so trifling, that in anyone not equal to them in sanctity and modesty they would cause shame rather than pride. And so clearly was their poverty not less than their charity revealed in such presents, that when duty or friendship demanded a gift at their hands, they gave an example of generous poverty, not of princely bounty.

Yet another fruit of domestic poverty is pointed out in these words by our holy Founder: "He, who wishes to follow the Society, shall persuade himself that the meanest things of the house shall be given to him." That none may think that this law of God and our holy Father was framed for those only, who are in the noviceship of their religious life, and are learning the first lessons of religious discipline, he subjoins immediately the reason, which embraces all, novices and those, who are formed, yea, and those spent in the Society's service. It is, that we must not stray from the path of virtue, which our Fathers, whose footsteps we follow, trod before us, that thus old and young of the Society's different grades may be united in sweet harmony; else, if those who come after relax and fall away from the perfection of their predecessors, the body with golden head will end in feet of clay. "For since the first members of the Society," says St. Ignatius, "were sorely tried by want and by a lack of necessities far greater than our straitened condition, those who are to come after them should strive their utmost with the help of the Lord to rival and even surpass them." Hence those whose many years of service are rich in merit should guide themselves by the example of our first Fathers; and let them see whether with equal patience they suffer the meanest things of the house to be given to them. Or do they not rather, put their toil out at interest among men, instead of giving it to God. They thus expect a golden harvest from this sorry usury, and by ridding themselves of the restrictions of poverty, they wish to live more comfortably than others. If

their wishes are not followed, do they not repine and complain of injustice and say that no regard is had for old age or worth in the Society, that those who have borne the burden of the day and its heat, are put on a level with the late-comers, who have toiled but for an hour? How much better would it be to change this language of a hireling for the words of a good and wise servant, who, after he has done all that has been commanded him, takes no credit to himself but exclaims: "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do."<sup>(6)</sup> Who of Christ's laborers toiled more than the Apostle, the teacher of the Gentiles? And who was more needy than St. Paul? Who has labored as he to obtain the necessities of life by the work of his own hands? But the poorer he is before the world, the richer is he in the eyes of God. Who will bestow on me, says St. Paul, on that day, not on this day, that is, in the present life, as St. Augustine remarks, the reward of my good deeds. And with this "cloth of recompense," as St. Gregory says, did Paul wipe away the sweat of his labors, seeking no human help or accepting it save when freely offered, to aid him in his poverty or a relief in need, lest it were thought he had any other aim in his labors than God, and the hope of eternal blessedness. Those whose hearts beat in sympathy with the great Apostle's, even grieve, if perchance they see Superiors treating them with indulgence, fearful that they will receive their reward in this life. Nay, if Christ, after praising their labors, made the same proposal to them, which He once made to the Angelic Doctor, to choose what reward soever they wished, they would answer with the same saintly Doctor: "none other, O Lord, than Thyself."

There are others again, for whom it is imperatively necessary to follow that counsel, common to nearly all Religious Orders, but of especial importance in the Society, that none of Ours entangle himself in worldly matters. And from what I shall say, the prudence of this rule, especially, in preserving whole and intact the rights of poverty, will be seen most clearly. And I would have those especially consider it, whose zeal for their kindred is rather

<sup>(6)</sup> Luke xvli.-10.

an unrestrained and indiscreet fondness, than a true and sincere affection. And they undertake all kinds of offices,—except that of a religious—to relieve their friends' financial distress, to help them gain a lawsuit, or to be the guardian of those who are too young to manage their own property. This demands frequent collections and payments of funds, under another's name, it is true, but according to their pleasure. And what is the outcome of all this? The marvellous sight of affection for one's friends making religious strangers to the spirit of religion; for charity turns a religious into a worldlyling, if, as is the usual outcome, it become so indiscreet as to overwhelm them with worldly affairs. The harm done to religious Orders by the liberty allowed such men is past reckoning. Superiors can scarcely ever command their services, so entangled are they in family affairs; for once settled in their country, or some certain place, they will not suffer themselves to be removed thence. Then it is hard to bring them back to the discipline of common life, after they have tasted the sweets of this seeming freedom, and their minds always occupied with the management and care of temporal matters find great difficulty in collecting their spent energies and directing them to progress in spiritual matters, especially, to advancement in prayer. But most insufferable of all, is it to bring suits, argue in the courts, and openly drive bargains for sale or gain. Is not this to sit in the custom-house, and to return, though a man of an apostolic vocation, to the life from which Christ called Matthew, when from a publican He would make him an Apostle? All their companions of the same Order are put to the blush, and the odor of their sanctity becomes a stench in the nostrils of the good. The mischief done to the reputation of the Order by such a religious can hardly be repaired by the severely religious life of the virtuous and the upright. Now, if not only he, who takes away his hand from the plough, but he who merely looks back, is unworthy of the kingdom of God, what shall we say of those, who leave their work undertaken for God and for their neighbor in the whitening fields, and abandon themselves wholly to worldly business? They are deceived at first sight by an



appearance, it is true, of charity towards their kindred, and they are unmindful how persuasive a flatterer nature is and how clever and practised in deceit. To offset its influence Christ, the Teacher of truth, showed that it is a kind of charity which, at times is seemingly severe ; as when He forbade the youth, who wished to follow Him, to return home to bury his father who had just died.

Finally, I have to speak of those, who, not having as yet renounced their property, purposely delay throwing off this last portion of their galling burden. Now if a love of poverty, if their progress in the way of the Lord, aye, if any regard for constancy and perseverance had any weight with these men, it would be fitting rather that they should, of their own accord, urge this as a request at least immediately after their noviceship, and not be constrained by their superiors to make it. Otherwise it may be feared lest their incomplete severance from the world might make them yearn for their possessions which they once despised. There are some, whom the devil makes sport of all the more easily, by holding out a picture of the immense good they can do by devoting their fortune to the erection of a college, or to securing greater prosperity for some house. Thus it will be necessary for them to retain their wealth for a long time, for speculation, until a sum has been reached sufficient to carry out the plan proposed. If there be any such among us, let them understand that they would be better sons of the Society, if they made Obedience and Poverty, and not riches, the aim of their efforts. It is in the very nature and economy of things, that everything grow after the manner of its birth. But religious Congregations were first built on the contempt of the world and all else created, aye, and on the dead former selves of their members. By this means, therefore, must they increase and grow in greatness. For what does it profit them, if they gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of discipline and of their sacred laws, which are their soul? It is a harmful charity which seeks to build a religious house, while it undermines the foundations of religious perfection ; "to multiply the nation, and not to increase the joy," I mean that joy which arises not from the

number of men, but from the practice of solid virtue. Hence let those who wish to give their goods to the Society, follow St. Augustine's rule ; that they hold themselves the first of their goods, and surrender themselves first to the Society. Nor should they wish, that the leave granted them in the Constitution, to retain possession of their property for a time, is a law, nay, a necessity bounded only by their own judgment and not by the Institute and the Superiors. But what must we think, if not love for the Society, but self-love, which ever throws new obstacles in the way, prompt them to delay their renunciation for a long time ; if they hold out hopes to others to expect a donation, and thus be able, even with the Superior's permission, to take from time to time, for purposes of their own, some part of what they have, in order to be treated with consideration in recognition of an anticipated and anxiously awaited endowment. Everyone sees how base it is to make God and their soul the sport of such deceits and wiles as these. But to overreach Superiors by them, as though their eyes were sealed, is baseness of the lowest kind. Therefore, since it is not possible, because of the varied condition of places and persons, to determine a fixed time, when each one must give up all, the only thing left to do is, that those who are allowed in the meanwhile to keep their property, should be as though they had nothing, and that no leave should be granted them to divert aught into private uses. Else, poverty, though a virtue of highest rank and worth, will be a temptation, if through the indulgence of Superiors they have means of freeing themselves from its inconveniences. They should bear in common with their brethren the irksomeness of poverty, and no matter how well founded the expectations are of receiving a share of their property, no exemption is to be granted them from the burden of common or private discipline. Pre-eminence is never to be shown them over others, for this would tend to create a privileged class, and to disgust and discourage the good who would see more consideration shown prospective donations than to present virtuous worth.

And, without question, the remissness or diligence of Superiors is

very powerful either for the Society's destruction or for its preservation. Hence they should with that dutifulness, which they more than all others owe the Society, strive earnestly to fulfil their charge in this matter, where peril is only averted by the most careful watching. And first and foremost, they should not be reckoned among those, who "say, and do not . . . who bind heavy and insupportable burdens and lay them on men's shoulders: but with a finger of their own they will not move them;"<sup>(7)</sup> but rather, as St. Peter wisely counsels, "being made a pattern of the flock,"<sup>(8)</sup> they should by frequent exhortation lead it to the pastures of poverty. But especially they should lead the flock by example, for a master's instruction will be idle, if his practice belie his teaching. Let them attract their subjects to poverty, but with the voice of the Spouse calling the soul He loves to the highest pinnacle of virtue, "Arise, make haste, my love."<sup>(9)</sup> "There is no little encouragement," says St. Bernard, "in the word added, 'come,' and not, 'go.' " Again, let them not, while influenced by a particular kindness or inclination towards some one, or fearful and cowardly, when discovering the offenders against poverty's laws, let them not, I say, turn away their eyes and pretend ignorance, blind watchmen and dumb dogs, as Isaias indignantly calls them. From this follows that careless willingness to grant permissions, as though obedience only, and not poverty, demanded our watchfulness: or as if subjects could be released from the obligations of community discipline and our holy laws to any extent that suits the Superior's fancy. However, they must avoid the two extremes, stinginess and prodigality. For some there are, who dignify meanness by the name of economy and thrift, and pose as lovers of poverty, whereas they are lovers of whatever is niggardly. But we should not quarrel with nature, for the fault is hers. And so with grasping hand they ever take, but give little, and, as an answer to their subjects' complaints, they whine about the needs and expenses of

<sup>(7)</sup> Matt. xxiii. 3-4.<sup>(8)</sup> I. Pet. v. 3.<sup>(9)</sup> Cant. ii. 10.



the house. But this is not to guard, but to destroy poverty. And it was not "godliness with contentment,"<sup>(10)</sup> but oppressive want that first brought ownership into religious families. True, it becomes men voluntarily poor for Christ to bear with generous courage the burden of even unjust privations. Still, there is nothing more unseemly than for a Superior to abuse the virtue of his subjects for the satisfaction of his own greed ; to rob laborers worthy of their hire, and to lay up a hoard which will be scattered, he knows not, where. Let Superiors then remember that they are indeed fathers, whose hearts should be filled with a strong and manly love ; a love, which will never with feeble indulgence grant the harmful requests of their sons. But let them, also, bear in mind that theirs is a mother's duty, which demands loving, fostering, and gentle kindness. This is a charge God Himself undertook, ay, in a manner impossible to mothers, for His care extends to the declining years of His children. Superiors should learn from the mother-bird, which is ever anxious and restless in seeking food for her young. Let them imitate skilful generals, who feared more for their troops from scarcity of supplies, than from the sword of the foe. "For want," says the Roman tactician, "destroys an army oftener than a battle, and hunger is fiercer than steel." Hence, with a well provisioned army they can march in security against the enemy and insist on military discipline with no fear of revolt ; else, they will have more disorder and tumult in camp, than discipline and bravery on the battle-field. A house will never be so straitened as to leave no room for charity. Subjects endure cheerfully sufferings from which they see Superiors anxious to relieve them, and charity supplies the deficiencies of poverty.

And this, dearest Fathers and Brothers in the Lord, is what I thought well to write to you at present on the subject of poverty. Considering the importance and dignity of the subject I have said but little, but I have spoken to those who not only know the law, but love it. Thus may we repeat that saying of St. Gregory the

(10) I. Tim. vi. 6.

Great, when invited to speak on wisdom to a community of perfect religious, "If religious," said he, "are vessels of God, I know that they have within them the fountain of wisdom, and so they need not catch the drops that come from my dry heart." And, perchance, my treatment of this whole subject of poverty would have been not only shorter, but more complete, had I held forth, as an example and a reward, Christ Jesus our Teacher and Leader; a nobler Model, or a richer Prize could not be proposed to any class of men. For He, Who being rich became poor for your sakes, that through His poverty you might be rich; Who "emptied Himself"<sup>(1)</sup> that of His fulness we might all receive; what other object has He left our yearning hearts than Himself in Whom we find all that our hearts could desire. But even though the poor in spirit could look to no other reward than to be sharers in the poverty of Christ, Who, as St. Ambrose says, made it precious and raised it to a height of glory when He consecrated it in His own person, should not this be considered the supremest happiness and the highest reward? When the Son of God came upon earth, why did He not bring with Him the dazzling splendor of His kingdom? "One might have thought," says St. Bernard, "that He should seek stately palaces, where the King of glory could be welcomed with due solemnity. But not for this did He leave His royal throne. In His left hand were riches and glory; in His right, eternity. In heaven these treasures were infinite, but poverty had no place there. However, there was an abundance, yea, a superabundance of it on earth and man knew not its worth. Therefore, the Son of God came down from heaven and chose poverty His own and made it precious in our eyes by the high value He set upon it." Hence that the humble shepherds might be first to recognize their poor Saviour, they receive from the angels the signs of His royalty, not a throne, but a manger; not purple, but swaddling-clothes. "Thy swaddling-clothes, Lord Jesus," adds the same St. Bernard, "were set for a sign, but for a sign which is contradicted even to this

(1) Philip. ii. 7.

day." For this is a great mystery, which the unwise man will not know, and the foolish will not understand, that poverty, embraced for God's sake, is a thing divine ; for God prized it above kingdoms and thrones, loved it with a special love, and united Himself so closely with it, that from Bethlehem to Calvary, from His birth to His death, He never suffered it to be separated from Him ; for the Infant Jesus with swathing-bands in the manger is also the same Jesus Who hung naked on the cross. Let us, then, my dear Brothers, greet poverty with cheerful and ready spirits ; and let us embrace with the heartfelt love of sons her, whom our Father St. Ignatius named and really made the "Mother of the Society." Let us make our loss of temporal things an investment and a gain in eternal goods. Let us, who have with Mary Magdalen poured out the precious ointment on the head of our Lord, break also the alabaster vase, for fear that the right or power remain of seeking aught of the things we have vowed to God ; and let us rejoice that we are poor for Christ, and rich in Christ, that we have nothing but Him, and that in Him we possess all things. Far from us be the cold words "mine" and "thine," which often extinguish the flame of the perfect love of God, and unfailingly lessen its warmth. And in conclusion, to address you in the words of Lactantius, "why do we hesitate to store that safely, which a single day will wrest from us? Why fear we to make eternal a good that is frail and fleeting, and to entrust all to God's care, where we need fear nor rust, nor thief, nor robber, nor despot. He who is rich before God, can never be needy. If we rate justice so highly, let us cast off the burdens that gall us and follow her. Let us strike off our fetters, that we may run to God without hindrance. It is a proof of a noble and lofty soul to tread underfoot the things of this earth."

Thus worthy of the Society of Christ Jesus, and of the companionship of our Fathers, whose bright example has shone before us from the dawning of our Order, let us labor earnestly for our own and our neighbor's salvation in the spirit of the Apostolic life we profess. "We shall lead indeed a poor life, but we shall have



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many good things." <sup>(12)</sup> Ours will be the gifts promised the poor in spirit, an unending happiness in the kingdom of God ; a favor which I ask God, Who is rich in mercy, Who is the Father of the poor, to grant in His kindness to you and to me.

The Servant of all in the Lord,

GOSWIN NICKEL.

*Rome,*

*September 30, 1653.*

<sup>(12)</sup> Tob. iv. 23.

## XI.

A LETTER OF VERY REV. FATHER GOSWIN NICKEL, TO THE  
FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY ON THE AVOIDANCE  
OF A NATIONAL, AND PROVINCIAL SPIRIT.

Whilst I guard with watchful care the house of God entrusted to my keeping, which has been reared by the wisdom of Christ Jesus, and shows from afar on its threshold the resplendent name of its Builder, visions of dangers often fill me with fear. For in the Gospel we are warned to dread for our spiritual dwelling the mighty floods of river and deluge of rain and the thieves of the night who would undermine it. But the dizzy height of this our tower piercing the skies compels me also to beware of the tempests' fierce assaults, lest, to our complete destruction and the intense delight of our enemies, that prove true which Christ denounces: "The winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof."<sup>(1)</sup> But may He in His mercy shield us from it. And that we may not repose in sluggish confidence with the belief that our abode is built on a rock, and that such fears are idle, we are awakened by the example of the house of Job. His house, as St. Gregory well observes, was firmly founded on the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which, the same Father says, were signified by the seven sons of Job; and on those three eminent virtues, faith, hope, and charity, represented by his three daughters. The house seemed to possess impregnable bulwarks against the attacks of the devil, yet a wind-storm rose in the desert, and rushing down upon the house razed it to the ground.

And this wind, Reverend Fathers, I would at present call no other than the party spirit, of which I purposed to speak; a chilling, baneful, frightful, and pestilential wind; which is not content with casting down the topmost pinnacles and the roof-covering, a loss not irreparable; but however firm in its masonry, it assails

(1) Matt. vii. 27.

the whole mass, at the four corners, as is written of the house of Job, and shaking it to its very base, rends every joint of the structure, quickly converting a fabric of fair and mighty workmanship into an unsightly ruin.

I treated of this dangerous spirit in the last Congregation of the Fathers Procurators and strove to avert from the Society with all my strength the destruction which it menaces. But the time allowed for the Congregation obliged me to confine myself to a few words. Still, as many of the assembled Fathers asked me for a written copy of my exhortation, to take back with them to their Provinces. I promised to accede to their request and communicate by letter with all the Provinces. And fearing that the brevity of my former discourse might mar its usefulness, I have treated the subject at greater length.

Now, to follow some fixed order throughout, I think it well, first to explain the nature of this evil and malign spirit, and to inquire whether the Society has already suffered from it; and secondly, to show what mischief we might fear from it, should it prevail in the Society. If these considerations are pondered as carefully as the serious nature of the matter deserves, they will provide us with remedies as safeguards, not merely useful but necessary for arming and fortifying ourselves with prudent foresight against the hostile spirit and the assaults of this foe.

In the first place, then, in calling this a "national" spirit, I may use perhaps a word that does not aptly express my thought. But to waive a mere question of words, let each one call it by what name so ever he chooses, after I shall have shown briefly what meaning I attach to it. The sacred books of the Prophets and the Apostles, as well as the writings of the fathers and doctors of mystical theology are accustomed to distinguish by the title of various spirits, judgments of the mind and tendencies and affections of the will.

If, now, there be men with this propensity and purpose, who provide for the private good of themselves and theirs, without regard to the advantage and highest interests of all; who seek them-



selves alone and their own aims ; who advance their homes, their kindred, their towns, but especially their provinces, even unscrupulously sacrificing the general good and property to favor themselves and to benefit their provinces, these would I call imbued with a spirit of nationalism. The reason for the use of the term will be more evident in a supposed case.

The Society of Jesus is a body composed of many members. It is a Religious Order containing men of different nations. It possesses Houses widely distributed in many towns, cities, countries, and kingdoms, and thus it is divided into certain Provinces. Now, if among the members of this body, or the religious of this Order, a large number of the whole, or a few of the many, or one in the whole collection—forgetful of the common end, which is the glory of God and the salvation of souls and of the means to those ends, which our Constitutions have determined—if even one, I say, should resolve to further his personal interests and pursue his private aims, by means of his own devising ; if he hold it just to make all else subservient to the good of his Province, his country, his people, his nation, and his kindred ; if he spare no effort, and halt at nothing to claim, and secure, and cling to the first place in honor and in office ; if for this, openly and covertly, in season and out of season, he strive, and labor, and care for naught besides, such a one, I unhesitatingly affirm, has lost sight of the holy purpose he had in entering this state of life, and, under the influence of party spirit, like the mariner driven from his course, yet keeping on under crowded sail, will inevitably suffer shipwreck.

The question now is, are men of that stamp to be found in the Society ? I see strong reasons for a denial. For how could men dead to the world, crucified with Christ, who have made of themselves a holocaust unto God, formed by so many Constitutions and Instructions, proved by so many trials, enlightened by so many brilliant examples, renewed by many yearly retreats, and daily meditations, and readings, and exhortations ; quickened by the frequent reception of the holy Sacraments ; men strengthened by their vows, by divine whisperings, by light from on high, how

could such men become so debased as to turn back, after having put their hand to the plough, or to think longingly of Egypt while in the Promised Land? How could they, forgetful of the divine glory, of their own salvation, of their neighbor's edification, sinfully cater to the yearnings of human friendship and affection for their earthly country, for their private family, and dishonorably seek their comfort? How could they, for such an end, turn obedience into disorder, subvert discipline, and actively engage in the overthrow of the work of God?

But even then, there are highly efficacious means for routing and wholly banishing this malignant spirit. So we can reasonably trust in the Lord, that, if there be any men in the Society such as we have described, they are at least very few in number. Still, while I examine thoroughly the numerous complaints brought to me, even though they be colored and exaggerated, as might be pleaded by way of excuse, a suspicion arises, which will not be downed, that some foundation underlies these many written remonstrances. Thus, when St. Paul wrote to the faithful at Corinth: "I hear that there are schisms among you" he straightway added: "and in part I believe it."<sup>(1)</sup>

But be the truth of the matter as it may, no one at any rate can deny, that the loyalty which binds us to our dear Mother, the Society, demands this at our hands, that whether we have been infected by the malady, which one shrinks from believing, or threatened by it, and this can hardly be questioned, we seek either a remedy for harm suffered, or a preservative against the menacing disease. Both purposes will, I think, be perfectly well served by pondering the immense losses we shall sustain, if we are not on our guard against this national spirit.

And in the consideration of these evils, we should pay special heed to the fact, that our Society cannot remain unharmed, since its very existence is endangered, if this spirit be allowed to prevail. For, it had its beginning in a union, inspired by the Holy Spirit, of nationalities and dispositions so varied and so widely different,

<sup>(1)</sup>I. Cor. xi. 18.

one from another, that it can be assailed by no weapon more deadly, by no tool can its ruin be more irreparably wrought, be it by craft or by violence, than if the harmonious union of members by which the body was first begotten, be replaced by a fatal withdrawal into individual hopes and aims, by an abandonment of the single unifying purpose leading to a common good, and by a pursuit of personal advantages that leads to disunion. For a whole, which is made up of many parts, can neither exist nor act, unless the various parts constitute either a natural union, as in the elements, where the natural adhesion of molecules forms one body, or a moral union from the agreement of wills, as in cities, in society, in the army, and in a household ; or finally, in a mechanical union arising from a purely external aggregation of parts, as is the case in works of art ; an edifice, a garment, a watch, and the like. And all these things depend on an enduring and undisturbed union, not only for their power and beauty and perfection, but for their safety, their life, and state of being. Resolve a substance into its elements ; let each element be now self-existent, and the compound cannot be called injured, it is rather destroyed, and its essence wholly lost. What caused the destruction of such powerful and flourishing nations as Assyria, Greece, Persia, and Rome ? Was it not the slipping away of their provinces, when the bonds of union were loosened and broken ? Now our Society, if the least may be compared with the mightiest, has, by the sacred commingling of different men, been formed into a beautiful body by the coalescent power of the Holy Spirit, and growing strong under the same Holy Spirit it has spread even to the uttermost bounds of the earth. And woe to us, if this vital bond be broken, if some isolate themselves within the narrow limits of a Province, or still narrower limits of college, and there, in a spirit of painful aloofness work solely for the Province's, or college's good, with no thought of the Society's greater welfare. And this disunion would be sadder, more dangerous, and more lamentable if it had place among the members of one and the same house or college. The mind recoils in dread from contemplating the fate of the Society



should this come to pass—and may the good Jesus keep us from it forever. But what would the result be, if such a misfortune were to come to pass? Would it not be the dispersion and ruin of the whole body? A “kingdom divided against itself” as Christ the Saviour said “shall be brought to desolation, and house upon house shall fall.”<sup>(3)</sup> And instead of that wondrous peace of which the Christ Jesus made us the living example, when He brought it to pass “that the wolf should dwell with the lamb, and the leopard should lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the sheep should abide together, and a little child should lead them,”<sup>(4)</sup> in place of this peace, which Christ has merited for us what would come to pass? Ingrates that we are, we would change that chosen vineyard of Christ, our Society, planted in the plenty and with fulness of peace from the beginning and preserved with its abundance for so many summers, we would change it by our disorders into an arena wherein, like maddened beasts we would tear each other to pieces, under the eyes of the whole world and amid the jeering and malicious applause of our delighted enemies.

We are all alike members of one body, and that the body of Christ. Whatever is wrested from a member of the body, is taken from Christ. That Brother, this Father is not less a member of Christ than I; he is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. Why am I disturbed, if the brilliant talent of some shines brightly, or his worth makes him eminent, since their light burns for my glory as well? Why would I rob him of that, which I possess already in him? Naught but the blindness of error makes this college or that Province strangers to me. They are in reality my possessions, a part of the inheritance of Christ, a kingly domain, the citadel of the mighty empire of my Father. May that House, that Province, in my desires, thrive and prosper, wherever it may be, among whatever people, and may it increase a thousand and a thousand fold! “For she is our sister,” words that, as you know full well, do not so much fall from the lips of Rebecca’s brothers, as from unerring and divine charity. Nay, she is with me the spouse of

<sup>(3)</sup> Luke xi. 17.

<sup>(4)</sup> Isai. xi. 6.

Christ, of whom He Himself says: "One is my dove, my beautiful one."<sup>(5)</sup> What an enormous crime it would be, to rend and tear, not the garment of Christ's spouse, but her very body! In another passage of the Sacred Writings we read, that such was the harmony between the children of Israel as to make them all even "as one man."<sup>(6)</sup> So many times were a hundred thousand men as one man. A signal glory, but not the greatest possible, and hence it belonged to the synagogue. It is the special prerogative of the Church to be really One, not to be as one. Harken to St. Paul speaking to all the faithful in the person of the Corinthians: "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."<sup>(7)</sup> "You are all one virgin," he says to them, "you are all but one Catholic Church." He, who withdraws himself from this union, has no share in the espousals of Christ; he who dissolves this union, casts off Christ. Let the spouse, then, look to it, that she be one; else will she cease to be a spouse. And to attain this end, let her heed the warning of the Royal Prophet: "Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear, and forget thy people and thy father's house."<sup>(8)</sup> So let us forget to what country, to what province, to what house we belong, we, who are the children of that Society, "whose vocation it is to travel to various places, and to live in any part of the world, where there is hope of God's greater service and the help of souls." Let us forget, I say, our earthly home, the house of our father in the flesh, and any return to the care and love of those things, which a long time since "we counted but as ordure, that we might gain Christ."<sup>(9)</sup> Let us reckon all this as not less unworthy of us than it would be in manhood to betray a longing for a nurse and childish baubles.

But why should I complain that the fair name of the Society is tarnished by this spirit, when, as we have clearly seen, its well-being and very existence are imperilled by its infectious breath? Still, this complaint is not wholly out of place, but serves rather to make

<sup>(5)</sup> Cant. vi. 8; ii. 10.    <sup>(6)</sup> I. Kings xi. 7.    <sup>(7)</sup> II. Cor. xi. 2.    <sup>(8)</sup> Ps. xlv. ii.

<sup>(9)</sup> Phil. iii. 8.

us look more keenly, not merely at the evil that exists in fact, but beyond, with prudent foresight, at that which is commonly regarded as such. For "to the wise and the unwise we are debtors;"<sup>(10)</sup> and "we are made alike a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men."<sup>(11)</sup> We need not, perhaps, be concerned about the judgment of God and the angels, if our conscience reproach us not, for God reads the heart; but the opinions of men are formed from what the exterior discloses. We may have, it is true, good reason at times for contention; just as Saints and Angels, to our knowledge, engaged in harmless strife. Yet scandal is given, and dark rumors are scattered broadcast. The ignorant, the malicious, the heretic hail with joy this struggle among the Jesuits. Let us beware, that the Society justly complain not in us of the sin, with which the Patriarch reproached his sons: "You have made me hateful to the inhabitants of this land."<sup>(12)</sup> Let it not happen through our fault, that anyone should taunt us in the words of St. Paul: "whereas there is among you envying and contention, are you not carnal, and walk according to man?"<sup>(13)</sup> There is none of us, I think, who does not cherish the beauty of the house of God, that is, of this Society, as dearer to him than any personal comfort, nay, than life itself. For in its halls have we chosen to dwell rather than in our fathers' homes; and of it, despite the world's alluring call to the enjoyment of its delights and pleasures, we have said with generosity and constancy: "This is my rest forever and ever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it."<sup>(14)</sup> Furthermore, it is too manifest to need proof, that the true unity of a single and a concordant mind comprises the beauty, the renown, the glory of this house, that is, of the Society; and here we should say with a generosity that falls not short of the Apostle's: "it is good for me to die, rather than that any man should make my glory void."<sup>(15)</sup> To the same purpose is St. Augustine's excellent comment on these words of the twenty-fifth Psalm: "I have loved the beauty of thy house:" "When living stones, the hearts of the faithful,

<sup>(10)</sup> Rom. i. 14.<sup>(11)</sup> I. Cor. iv. 9.<sup>(12)</sup> Gen. xxxiv. 30.<sup>(13)</sup> I. Cor. iii. 3.<sup>(14)</sup> Ps. cxxxii. 13.<sup>(15)</sup> I. Cor. ix. 15.



are bound together by the bond of charity, there is the beauty of the house of God, the site of the tabernacle of His charity."

Still Reverend Fathers, I do not wish you by this, to have regard for renown merely, when the continued existence of this body, of this Society, of which we are members, is surely put in jeopardy. For the Society can not stand firm, and I can never repeat this too often, unless the spirit of nationalism be torn out by the roots, and unless we are wedded into one by the closest union. That we are united, by the grace of God, against the suspicions either of malice or of thoughtlessness, we can adduce convincing proofs and examples of the genuine union which flourishes in the Society at the present time. But I have chosen this as an opportunity not of congratulation, for that is a unnecessary, but of admonition. Of the two emotions therefore, which I deeply feel, one of pleasure at the peaceful reign of harmony, another of fear lest it ever be disturbed and become discordant, I deem this latter sentiment more useful and pointed at present. I fear, I say, however evident the general welfare appears, that some of us may become negligent in "catching the little foxes, that destroy the vines,"<sup>(16)</sup> and in "dashing the little ones of Babylon against the rock;"<sup>(17)</sup> that is, in destroying the seeds of strife and rivalry which are begotten and fostered by nationalism.

There is but one heart and one mind among us. I see it, I rejoice at it, and I thank the Author of all good things for it. But the more I love the good, the greater is my fear, that incitements to the rivalry, I mentioned, may arise, and, kindled by the spark of a heedless word, may burst into a flame of quarrel, only to be extinguished by an unstinted stream of grace and charity. All too heedless is he, who surrenders himself to the restless beginnings of this dire disorder, and is hurried on farther than he could wish. For it can hurry to destruction those whom it holds within its grasp. True, the wound inflicted by its bite is not mortal, it is hardly dangerous. Yet, neither can we question St. Paul's warning to the Galatians, who were bickering amongst themselves:

<sup>(16)</sup> Cant. ii. 15.

<sup>(17)</sup> Ps. cxxxvi. 9.

“But if you bite . . . one another, take heed you be not consumed one of another.”<sup>(18)</sup> Evils rarely die in their birth. Strife often kindles passing anger into fury. If no other harm result from these disputes, we sap the strength which should be kept for conflicts with our undoubted foes; we relax our vigilance against the ever threatening wiles of mortal enemies, when we should be constantly on our guard, and so make ourselves the objects of their scorn and the easy prey of their treachery. St. Gregory Nazianzen proves admirably the folly of such a course by an illustration drawn from the conduct of mariners in a storm at sea. “If the sea,” he writes, “dashed its furious surges against us, and raged about the ship, how could our vessel escape destruction, should the seamen fall to quarrelling and struggling among themselves.”

But I must now be as brief in the remainder of my letter as my preceding remarks have been extended. It will be enough for me show, that this national spirit, so often condemned, is the assured bane and death of charity, and also, by direct consequence, of the Society itself. For the Society was reared by its Founder on a groundwork of charity, and if the foundation crumble, the whole fabric must fall with it. To my mind, nothing is more directly opposed to this lonely brooding and self-absorbing spirit, that keeps to itself whatever it possesses, than a true, unaffected love of men for God's sake; a charity, which extols and makes its own the duty of loving all men created to God's own image and loved first by Him, not for natural or human reasons, but for God. Therefore, let not those vaunt their charity, whose likes guide them in their love of their fellow-men. Neither does he merit to be called a man of Christian charity, who from a natural impulse loves his parents, relatives, his countrymen, or townsmen. Christ our Lord clearly expresses this: “For if you love them, that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathens this?”<sup>(19)</sup> The difference, therefore, lies wholly in the motive of love. I love some one, because he is my friend, or

<sup>(18)</sup> Gal. v. 15.

<sup>(19)</sup> Matt. v. 45, 46.

is a fellow-countryman of mine. This is not even a philosophical love, for that has virtue for a motive ; but it springs from an instinct of nature, and may be discerned in brute animals, whose instinct makes them love their own, and be affectionate to those who show them kindness. Much less is it christian charity, which, as I have said, loves men purely for God.

Now then, if there be those among us, and God forbid that such be found, who would claim as their peculiar right the duties of the care of souls, of teaching, of government, and other charges of the Society, not because called by God, chosen by Superiors, or appointed by religious authority, but from chance, accident of birth, and by some hereditary privilege, if they were inspired with such feelings towards others, as are expressed in the words spoken to Jephthe by his angry brethren : "Thou canst not inherit in the house of our father, because thou art born of another mother ;" <sup>(20)</sup> could anyone, I ask, reasonably believe that such men are possessed of charity ? I think not. But what, if these men are learned, prudent, and held in higher esteem than others ? I make bold to say, supported by the authority of St. Paul, "yet they are nothing ;" <sup>(21)</sup> because they who love in a merely natural manner are not inflamed with the charity of Christ, and because they who spurn from them all whom they deem strangers, wound Christ's charity. The remark of St. Augustine was true : "who ever wounds charity is nothing, however great be his gift." And these words of this holy Father can avail much to cheer the drooping spirits of some timid persons. For, without question, these are troubled deeply at times and pained, when they see, or seem to see, men venerable for their years, in the foremost rank of scholarship and eloquence, and what is a more powerful motive to disgust the minds of the weak, when they see, I say, even those who are advanced before many others to the highest duties and honors of their Order, carried away by regard for persons to such a degree of uncharitableness as to heap fulsome and undeserved praises on some, and with like excess to disparage others ; to extend their protection and patronage to a

<sup>(20)</sup> Judges xi. 2.

<sup>(21)</sup> I. Cor. xiii. 2.



favored minority, that they strive in every way practicable to advance to offices and preferment, while they pass by unheeded and as strangers, and deprive of every advantage others, who, in the gifts of grace and nature, are the peers of the more fortunate. And to such conduct nothing urges them more strongly than motives of friendship and national fellowship. But we must not conclude too hastily that there are those guilty of this fault. Still, if the guilt of anyone be proved, then, according to St. Augustine, whoever he be, whatever great gift be his, he is nothing, since he wounds charity. Let such men, therefore, have a care, and deservedly fear, lest, when the day of the Lord shall come, all their greatness, reared on the foundation of men's good opinion, and their merit, spoiled by a national spirit, fade away as smoke, and, though men of riches, yea, spiritual and heavenly riches, "they shall have slept their sleep," as David says, but awaken with "nothing in their hands."<sup>(22)</sup> And it was very well said by Father Laynez, of holy memory, on this subject, that "Orders and degrees in the Church militant are distinguished by those gifts, which are called 'freely bestowed;' but in the Church triumphant, by the gifts which make their recipient acceptable to God." Hence St. Paul, after recounting the free gifts of God, exhorted the faithful "to be zealous for the better gifts,"<sup>(23)</sup> that is, charity without which, as he says, a man is nothing, whatever else he possess. For charity, beside the promise and unfailing pledge of future bliss, which is hers, arms this present life with needful safeguard of virtue. The same Apostle teaches us this in his well known enumeration of the characteristics of charity: "charity is patient, is kind,"<sup>(24)</sup> and so on. And in following out the same idea, Gregory the Great addresses the faithful on charity in words closely akin to our present purpose. "Therefore, let us preserve," he says, "with unyielding firmness this mother and guardian of virtues; let no crafty tongue among us weaken, no wiles of our ancient enemy destroy her power." He calls charity not the mother

<sup>(22)</sup> Ps. lxxv. 6.<sup>(23)</sup> I. Cor. xii. 31.<sup>(24)</sup> I. Cor. xiii. 4.

merely, but also the guardian of virtues. And this to teach us, that the other virtues cannot survive charity, as daughters their mother, but they must fall with her fall, since she is their guardian as well. And as they cannot come into being without a mother, so they cannot continue without a guardian. St. Ambrose assigns as the reason of this, Christ's absence from a soul void of charity. For in this absence, just as if the head were severed from the body, the spirit ceases to vivify the members. Thus he comments on those words of the Gospel: "the Son of man hath not whereon to lay His head."<sup>(25)</sup> "But as soon as our heart begins to be not a place of repose for our neighbor, but a pit-fall, then Christ turns away His head from us." And St. Jerome, concurring in this opinion, says: "The retreat of the Lord is not to be found, where peace exists not. And where there is envy and discord, there assuredly God our Protector is not."

Wherefore, I would here address the Society in the words in which St. Augustine speaks to the Church. "O Jerusalem, who art builded as a city; who art compact together; let peace be in thy strength, let peace be in thy love, because thy strength is thy love." Yes, charity and brotherly love will put an end to every trouble, calm all unrest, and subdue all animosities. Then sweet peace, fair to look upon, will come and abide with us forever. Then murmuring against Superiors will cease; none will envy the fortunate; those of a foreign land will not be neglected; the humble will not be despised, if a true, holy, and evangelical charity thrive among us, a charity which teaches all of us to recognize and reverence God's image in each of our brothers, whoever he be; a charity which, as St. John Chrysostom says, "conceals from the eye with its golden wings" whatever faults and shortcomings may exist. It will not be amiss to recall here that vivid description, by the same holy Father, of a community hal-  
lowed and ruled by discreet charity. "I fain would lead you," he says, "were it possible, into a city, where there would be but one soul, and to see there a harmony, unmarred by discord, and sweeter

<sup>(25)</sup> Matt. viii. 20.

than the music of any harp. This is a melody that delights the angels and the Lord and God of angels. Its strains do not merely soothe the passions, but keeps them from being roused, and brings upon all a wondrous tranquillity. And under the sway of charity, the vehement love of friends is subdued and calmed, even as the wild beasts are tamed and softened."

Let us, then, my Fathers, love so great a virtue, let us embrace it ourselves, and lead others to its practice. Let us exchange all human affection and natural friendships for this heavenly and holy charity. Let us thrust from ourselves all natural spirit and sentiment, and pass by unheeded all differences of nation and city and residence; all quarrels, bickerings, and stubborn jealousies of country and Province. Let us be ignorant of a tongue, which dwellers in the heavenly city reckon as barbarous. Cheap is the purchase of the precious treasure, of the glittering pearl of divine charity, by severing the ties of flesh. The holy Spouse possessed this treasure, and knew its value, when she said: "if a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing." <sup>(26)</sup>

And let us not allege the distance that separates us, nor our dispersion throughout the world demanded by the service of souls, as an excuse for failing in charity. Remoteness and absence impair not the union of that charity, which lives and thrives among Saints, and which has for an unyielding bond perfection and God Himself. "Charity," as Ildebert exquisitely writes, "is as broad as the world. For the charity, that made a single state of heaven and earth, can easily unite those who dwell in different lands."

The third and last topic now remains to be treated. And I gladly begin it with these words of the Church, changed slightly to suit my present purpose. "Enkindle, O Lord Jesus, in thy Society, that spirit, which Blessed Ignatius Loyola served, in order that we, filled with the same spirit, may be zealous to love what he loved, and to fulfil in deed what he taught." And what was this spirit of St. Ignatius which must be awakened in us? Surely,

(26) Cant. viii. 7.



not a provincial, but a universal one ; not a spirit which subordinates everything to our petty, selfish aims, but one directed to the common good. When did he prefer one nation to another ? When did he rest his judgment of persons on race or country, and not on virtue and real gifts ? What was his opinion, what his commands concerning this baneful spirit, and fraternal charity ? They may be found written on almost every page of the Constitutions, and I beg of you to read again and again his counsels and to meditate upon them.

And no other spirit than this lived in those first sons of the same holy Father. For although they were gathered together from different countries, and from countries little in accord with one another, and at a time too, when nations were torn by deadly warfare, yet they never betrayed the slightest sign of the intense hatred, born of partisanship. When did one of them object to another on the score of age or place of birth ? Whither now have flown the happy days of that golden liberty ? Then the General allotted to each his home and charge as utility and necessity demanded, without distinction of nation or kindred, of country or ancestry, while none complained. Then did St. Ignatius, with the approval of all, appoint a Frenchman as first rector of the Roman College, a Spaniard in Paris, a Belgian in Perugia, a Frenchman in Padua. Then preachers, professors, and other laborers in the Lord's vineyard were summoned, sent, and changed without delay and without a murmur, from Province to Province, from town to town, nay, to distant missions at the beck of the Superior. To give greater force and strength to this truth, especially necessary at the present time, I cannot and should not neglect to add, even though it seem an idle task, the incident which Fr. Peter Ribadeneira, one of St. Ignatius' dearest sons, has left in his soliloquies. The Father was witness to the fact in the college at Palermo. I subjoin his very words, with which he addresses God : " It was the peculiar work of Thy hands, and an image of the early Church, to see Flemings, Italians, Spaniards, and Frenchmen, at a time when a war was waging between France and Spain, living together with

a love that made us seem to have but one heart and one soul. We were seven teachers, but all of different nations. First was Father Nicholas Lannoy, a Fleming, Rector of the College and Professor of Theology ; Father Paul de Achilles, a Lombard, Professor of Philosophy ; I, a Castilian, taught Rhetoric ; Br. John Roger, a Parisian, was Professor of Humanities ; Br. Michael Botelo, a Portuguese, was Master of the First Class of Grammar, Father Juvenal, a Piedmontese, was Master of the Second Class of Grammar, while Father Peter Venustus from Valteline, and hence a Grison, was Master of the Third Class of Grammar. And though we were all so different in race and country, yet we had really but one spirit in Christ." Behold, how happy and how blessed was the condition of the Society and of those first sons of St. Ignatius, at that time ! Who at that period ever heard of factions that aimed at dwelling in certain places and houses, or remaining in certain offices ? Where, at that time, was solicited for the same ends the recommendation of princes, or the intervention of people and ruler secured by means not always honorable ? Our first Fathers were utter strangers to these artifices and shameful schemings, because among them there was union of hearts, and nationalism, of which those artifices are the unhappy offspring, was banished from their midst and from the whole Society. Let us too banish it from among us, Reverend Fathers, and let us be united in those sacred bonds which linked them together as with a heavenly chain, and the wars and quarrels of peoples will not breathe on us the pestilence of discord. St. Gregory makes a remark, pertinent here, on the words of Ezechiel about the four living creatures : " and the wings of one were joined to the wings of another." <sup>(27)</sup> " They are united in harmony," he says, " though differing from one another in duty, in nature, and in spirit ; and forgetting their separate inclinations ; together were they lifted up and together they walked." For it is not the difference of persons, but the disunion of wills, that hinders religion from being the heaven which St. Bernard says it should be. Wherefore, as St. Augustine very truly wrote of the blessed

<sup>(27)</sup> Ezech. i. 9.

in heaven, "even then will the Saints of God have their differences, but harmonious not discordant, that is, agreeing, not at variance ; as sweetest music results from mingling different, but concordant sounds."

But I should never end, were I to follow fully the rich vein which the subject opens to me. I shall, therefore, bring my letter to a close, and conclude with nearly the same words with which I ended my exhortation addressed to the Fathers assembled in the last Congregation of Procurators. Then I declared that I knew their dispositions and the attitude of the Order ; that I was well aware how they hated nationalism, and shrank in horror from its foul workings, and how heartily they wished to banish this baneful spirit, if it had gained strength among us, or had even stolen into our midst. Yet I added, that, however loyal and holy such zeal and such sentiments might be, they were far from sufficient to effect a reform, unless throughout all the Provinces the same feeling and spirit prevailed. Therefore, I entreated and implored all to work with untiring efforts to induce all other members of their respective Provinces to embrace the same sentiment and opinion.

And by means of this letter, Reverend Fathers, I make the same request to you with the greatest earnestness. Some there are who have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit and by His aid have discovered the fearful dangers in this spirit of nationalism. They have fought against it with stout hearts as the most avowed enemy and bitterest foe of the Society. Others, now for the first time recognize its manifold malice and turn from it with deepest aversion and hatred, convinced not merely by the reasons adduced in this letter, but rather by the testimony of Holy Scripture and the authority of the Fathers. But I beg and beseech all, not only to continue firm and unswerving in that holy hatred, but also to increase it and advance in it more and more as the days run on.

Again I ask that you do not regard this sentiment of indignation and strong displeasure, which you have formed against nationalism as a sufficient means of ridding the Society of its pestilential influence. For though it is good and praiseworthy, it will be bur-



ied in your souls without bringing forth fruit in others, if it issue not forth, and make others aware of its existence. Furthermore, I entreat you to employ advice, argument, aye, every means in your power, to bring others to admit and approve your correct and honest judgment on the malignant character of this sectional spirit, and to imitate your conduct. In like manner you must not think your duty ended, when you have conceived a holy and a wholesome hatred for this spirit and its malice. But you must prevail on others, by advice and persuasion, to awaken and foster the same hatred in themselves. You must induce them to mourn with us in bitterness for those who have been touched and stricken down by this plague, and to engage actively with you in correcting them and bringing them to a healthier and more vigorous state and remaining staunch and unwavering in their fealty to those religious principles and convictions. May you and they have the consolation of seeing these better sentiments, which are those of the Society and her truest members enshrined within the hearts of all.

And none can deny that our holy calling, and the duty, which is Ours as true and faithful sons of the Society, deservedly demands of us this service. That we may fulfil this obligation, let all resolve, as I have so often repeated, to succor the Society if endangered by partisan feelings; to rekindle the fire of charity in themselves and others, if it has grown cold; to put the example of our Fathers, the reputation of the Society, the edification of our neighbor, and the glory of God, before all human affections; to uphold in word and deed not what flesh and blood have revealed, but what our Father's spirit has spoken in our Constitutions and our Rules. Amen.

The servant of all in the Lord,

GOSWIN NICKEL.

*Rome,*

*November 16, 1656.*

**XII.**

A LETTER OF OUR VERY REVEREND FATHER ALOYSIUS CENTURIONE TO THE FATHERS AND BRETHREN OF THE SOCIETY ON THE SPIRIT OF OUR VOCATION.

At the moment when it pleased the Divine Goodness to lay upon my weak shoulders the heavy burden of governing the whole Society, overcome by the appreciation of the magnitude of the trust committed to me, and under the impulse of deep emotion, I publicly declared with all frankness to the Fathers of the General Congregation that I fully realized that I had assumed personally the individual obligation of each member of the Society. For it is required of those who rule the Society, nay, rather it is exacted of them, not only to keep the whole body of the Society sound and vigorous, but also to stir each one to fervor and to the spirit of our ministry, whereby all may follow out our Constitutions and accomplish what the design of our peculiar vocation requires. Could I have had the opportunity of addressing each one personally it would have been a great pleasure to me indeed ; for thus I could have discharged the better the duties of the office imposed upon me, to animate the fervent, arouse the indifferent and give a stimulus to all to strive to correspond, as far as possible, with the end of our vocation, the example of our forefathers, and the high expectations which God and men have of the sons of the Society. But as it has not been given me to meet you face to face, I would not neglect this opportunity of writing to you, and of thus substituting this letter for my presence and, in some measure, at least, compensating for my absence. At the outset, then, I embrace with sincere charity all the Fathers and Brothers of the Society ; and I pray and beseech them individually to be mindful of the high vocation to which God has chosen them, and to consider seriously in God's presence whether they respond thereunto, each one in his degree, with the proper spirit, a spirit, indeed, that is

sincere, fervent, active, and unfailing. This spirit, in truth, is the peculiar and more definite mark and characteristic of our vocation. Of course I am aware that the Society, by favor of the Divine Goodness, has borne fruit in an abundance of laborers of this type ; but since the number of its members has increased so largely, there is truly reason to fear that the number of those, too, may increase, who, unmindful of this end and given to idleness, intent solely upon their own comfort, may shirk labor and immure themselves within our houses, thus becoming useless servants in the vineyard of the Lord, or even by their example a real scandal unto others. And truly, these, as Saint Gregory Nazianzen affirms, as long as they are extremely few, are reckoned as no more than so many diseased members of this body of religion, which, although a burden, do not therefore weaken the vigor of the sound and uninjured members and the whole body. Besides they can be healed and restored to their original strength by the help of the healthier parts, and especially by the assistance of the divine grace. Nevertheless, as the same Nazianzen adds, "when many members are seriously diseased, the whole body cannot help suffering and falling into open danger." Meditating, therefore, in accordance with the obligation of my office, on the way by which this evil, so serious and so injurious to our Society, may possibly affect some individuals and from them gradually pass to others, and so destroy the soundness of the whole body, I have come to the conclusion that this evil is brought on solely through forgetfulness of the truly Apostolic spirit of our vocation. For by this it happens that either we refuse altogether the labors proper to our Institute, or, if we undertake them, we do not refer them as we should to the glory of God and to the salvation of souls, which God himself has created and with so much love has sought out and redeemed. Now this evil, even as it is fatal to the individual members of our Society, is also the source and origin of many other evils which flow therefrom. Hence if—which God forbid !—this evil should begin to spread imperceptibly, owing to the common tendency downward and to the remissness of Superiors, which are the two ordinary



causes, as Saint Bernard justly remarks, of destruction to Religious Orders, it could beyond all doubt bring the whole Society into the greatest and surest peril. Wherefore, to satisfy this desire also, which God has given me, of seeing at this time the primitive fervor rekindled and the spirit of our vocation restored in all, I have determined to suggest to each one's consideration, what an evil thing it is and how vicious it should be thought in one of the Society, to withdraw himself by degrees from the labors of our Institute, and cease to embrace them untiringly with his whole soul, and with that spirit of true charity which is proper to our vocation. Yet by this spirit alone, I have hope in the Lord, Who has chosen us out of many and destined us for these labors, the hope, I say, that the sluggard be aroused and the fervent with more ardor and speed run the course they have begun, and that the Society may be blessed daily with new virtues and become more pleasing to God and profitable to our neighbor.

First of all then, when I propose the spirit of our vocation as the chief incentive to serve the divine glory and to embrace earnestly all enterprises to that end, each one must see that I wish to have understood nothing else than an extraordinary, holy ardor excited within us by divine grace. For God's grace has called us to this community of life, and in truth, has so drawn us on from the start, that nothing seemed to us more lovely and desirable than that high end, which the Society has proposed,—the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls. Furthermore, this ardor, once kindled in our souls, is thereafter fanned to a flame and kept blazing, nay, is even increased, by our co-operation; but its strength is best sustained, if we constantly keep recalling to mind the end for which alone we live in the Society. And while in this way that ardor in our souls is kept from burning low, it makes us not only desirous, but prompt and eager, to undertake earnestly and bravely the functions of the Society, since we are sure that no means are more apt than these for securing without fail the end we seek. This statement of mine Saint Ignatius, the Founder and Father of our Society, has embodied in that short formula of our

Institute which he presented to the Sovereign Pontiffs, Paul III. and Julius III. In it he has with singular exactness outlined the whole idea of the spirit of the Society and our duty with regard to it. And surely it will give offence to none, nay, it will be a grateful pleasure to all, if I shall quote the words of our holy Father, and make him in a way speak to us, seeing that his words have always given a new impetus to the fervent in their correspondence with their vocation, while they have been a stimulus to the slothful, especially when these had deserted their labor and given themselves up entirely to ease and idleness.

First, then, our holy Father has set this as the foundation of the spirit and duty of his sons,—that each one of us, who has been called by God to this Society of His Son, should be persuaded that he has become a part of that Company, whose chief end is his heart's fondest aim,—namely, to undergo perpetual labors, either by defending the orthodox faith in the midst of heretics, by sowing the good seed among the Gentiles, or finally by preserving and increasing it among Catholics by promoting the spiritual progress of souls. “Whoever wishes in our Society, which we desire to have the name of Jesus for its ensign, to fight for God under the standard of the Cross, he shall set before his soul that he is a member of a Company organized for this purpose chiefly, to devote itself especially to the defence and propagation of the Faith and to the advancement of souls in Christian life and doctrine.” This was the prime purpose of our holy Father when he first willed to infuse into the minds of us all from our very foundation that spirit of high aspiration and prompt readiness for every noble enterprise. He would have us recollect and keep fixed in our minds that we are part and parcel of that Company which he has just described; and that therefore, if we do not wish to be considered degenerate members, a disgrace to the rest of the body, we should put forth all our energy to attain that end.

This is the first thing laid down by our holy Father, and to this he added a second,—that each one of us should take special care to keep this spirit alive and vigorous by his own diligent industry.

We shall, indeed, compass this, if we keep constantly before our eyes that end, at the vision of which we have felt this spirit first awoken within us. Wherefore, he added that, whereas we were men who made profession of spending our lives and strength for this sole end,—to seek the greater glory of God with the help of the duties of our ministry through the means prescribed by the economy of our Institute,—it is exacted of us I say, in consequence to keep our eyes turned towards God and towards the duty of our office, as long as life shall last, whereby we may advance, as far as by our efforts we may, to the end proposed to us by God. “And let each one’s care be during his whole life to keep before his eyes, first, God and then the plan of this, His Institute, which is a path unto God, and advance with all his strength to this end proposed to him by God. Finally, as a spirit of this mould brings with it a promptness of action and a fund of enthusiasm, and even the very enterprises which correspond to so sublime a vocation, our holy Father closes this whole section as follows:—It is indeed right that all should first “weigh well this vocation, and meditate long and seriously before they take this burden upon them, whether they are able to finish this tower according to the counsel of the Lord;” but after we have taken up this burden and by the free oblation of our own will have enrolled ourselves in this militia, there is nothing left but with prompt and cheerful mind to meet in full the obligation which we have thus contracted with God. “But after they shall have enlisted—by God’s inspiration—in this militia of Jesus Christ, they ought to be with loins girt night and day, and ready for the discharge of so magnificent a duty.”

This, then, is the spirit of our vocation, a truly, Apostolic spirit, free from all attachment to human affections, forgetful of our own interests, shunning ease and the comforts of life, loving only labors, those namely which directly concern the sanctification of souls, or the means thereunto. Besides, this is that debt which we have contracted with God, and God Himself will exact the payment of it with the strictest exactness. It is debt, I say, beyond all question the most solemn, for that it is wrapped up inseparably with



the first and chief element of the end of the Society and of our vocation. Moreover, I confess that I know not how he should be thought guilty of a light fault only, who dares defraud God of His due either in full or in any considerable extent.

Of a truth, although the end of the Society contains two parts, of which the first is to work for our own salvation and perfection,—the second, for the salvation and perfection of our neighbor, and though the former should by the law of charity go before the latter, and that the more,—since the Holy Ghost expressly declares, “He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good? and he shall not take pleasure in his goods;”<sup>(1)</sup> yet it cannot be denied that the former element is by no means the mark to distinguish the Society from other Religious Orders. The chief mark of the Society, the design that is characteristically and uniquely hers, is to spend all our energy and effort on the salvation and perfection of our neighbor. And on this account, there is constant mention of this point, as of our prime end, in the Formula of our Institute, and in the documents of the Sovereign Pontiffs and in divers places in our Constitutions. Thus our holy Father in the second chapter of the first part of the Constitutions wishes that this proposal should be made to all those who are entering the Society, while yet they are at the very entrance and on the threshold, that it is unqualifiedly required of them to conceive a supreme ardor, a flaming fire, as it were, of zeal for the salvation of souls, and to attach themselves with particular love to this our Institute for this reason: “that it leads straight to the helping of souls to the attainment of their last end at the hand of God our Creator and Lord.” Again, in the third part of the Constitutions he recalls to the memory of those who have already entered the Society that “the whole Society has been established for the universal good and the profit of souls.” And to pass over many places which occur throughout, in the tenth part of the Constitutions he prescribes the means which may most contribute “to the preservation and increase of the spirit of the Society and to the compassing of the object, which

<sup>(1)</sup> Ecclus. xiv. 5.

it has set before itself, of the assistance of souls to the winning of their last and supernatural end.”

Now if it cannot for a moment be questioned that this obligation of working for the attainment of this object and of seeking in every way the salvation of souls is in itself most serious, and has, moreover, been distributed to all personally, so as to affect equally each individual,—can any one of us flatter himself that he is guiltless before God, if, averse to the labors which are proper to our vocation, he fail in his duty and neglect his portion of the bond, which falls to him as a member of this body, in proportion to the measure of talents received from God and according to the injunction of obedience? Nay, if we will only judge from a standpoint of true and sound sense, it will plainly appear that the road which leads to the salvation and perfection of our neighbor is the same one which leads to our own. For our own perfection and salvation in great measure, come to this, that we should labor with a spirit of true zeal for the salvation and perfection of many, not only because our own perfection requires that we discharge our duty, but also because God refuses to the sluggard the more ample graces which are necessary for its discharge. For the bestowal of His graces is according to the measure of our co-operation, just as we read in Holy Writ was done by Jacob, who imparted not the same blessing to all his sons, but diversely according to the disposition of each:—“He blessed every one of his sons with their proper blessings.”<sup>(2)</sup>

This is the place to mention a consequence most true and at the same time a just cause of supreme shame to the slothful. If we fly the above class of labors through disgust thereat, we shall be readily led into that state, truly unhappy and most pitiable in the sight of God, where we shall be well nigh destitute of all merit and have no recommendation for religious virtue. In very truth, if other Religious Orders do not direct their efforts to the salvation of souls as much as we should do according to the spirit of our Institute, nevertheless they have many duties of precept in the

<sup>(2)</sup> Gen. xlix. 28.

matter of virtue, wherein they engage themselves with no small praise ; such are a strict withdrawal from the society of men, protracted prayers, night watching, fasts, chastisements of the body, the constant chanting in choir of the canonical hours night and day and many other kindred exercises, which, though they be most holy and praised by our holy Father, yet have not in the same measure and manner been prescribed for our Society, for the sole reason that " the occupations," as our holy Father declares in the fourth part of the Constitutions, " which are assumed for the help of souls are of great importance and proper to our Institute and exceedingly numerous. It is proper, then, that Ours should be busied in those things which are more peculiar to our vocation for the glory of God." Now, if each one of the Society gathers no fruit and merit either from the duties of his own vocation, which he neglects by his own fault, or from the pious practices of other Orders, which are not prescribed us, what profit at all will there be that he can promise himself from his life and religious vocation, especially if—as is of ordinary occurrence in souls of this disposition—he despises and neglects also the observance of domestic discipline ?

No matter how we may wish to view negligence and inertness of soul in the performance of our proper duty, we shall surely find that it is not without blame of a serious nature. For if it be referred to God Who has chosen us with a view to use us, massed under the standard of the Society, for the defeat of the evil designs of Lucifer and for the rescue of so many souls from ruin, cannot that reproach rightly be directed to us, which we read in Ezechiel ? " You have not gone up to face the enemy, nor have you set up a wall for the house of Israel, to stand in battle to the day of the Lord." <sup>(3)</sup> But if we look to the souls of men made slaves to Satan through their own idleness, sentenced with him to everlasting punishment and soon to pay the penalty of their sins ; when we consider these souls which might have been rescued by us unto liberty and salvation,—what reason is there why God should not cry out

<sup>(3)</sup> Ezech. xiii. 5.



against us with awful and threatening voice: "The wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand."<sup>(4)</sup> Why, if we consider the cities which have received us with all generosity, and at their own expense provide our food and sustenance in the hope that we may be of service to their citizens in what concerns the training of the soul, who does not see how criminal it is to deceive their hopes and frustrate their expectations? Let us bethink us of the thought which St. Gregory has left us in this precise relation:—"What a damnable thing it is without labor to receive the reward of labor." But if at the last we turn our eyes on the Society, which like a fond mother has with so much pains and affection nourished us these many years and looks to us for no other fruit of her anxious care and trouble save that we shall not be degenerate sons, but sons ennobled by the spirit and zeal of our Fathers,—what blame, I ask, will be ours, if we shall be not only a burden but even a shame to our loving mother? If by the sloth and negligence of some she behold the fine gold of her charity tarnished in the common esteem of men and that fire of soul extinguished, which was the heritage of our forefathers, their treasure and their crown. This is the reason why of such sons, fallen from their ancient worth, the words were written that they "are the sorrow of their mother;"<sup>(5)</sup> nay more, that "they bring their mother to shame."<sup>(6)</sup> And here let no one persuade himself that I am talking only to the Professed and to those on the mission, and refer to none others. Assuredly I take in all grades of the Society in my address, since it is not to be doubted that all should have the common spirit of that vocation which in common we all profess, each in his own grade. There are three chief means proposed to us by holy men, whereby we may assist our neighbor, to wit, prayer, good example and devout conversation on divine things. And these surely lie open to us all and are common property. Even from their noviceship our holy Father desires that our novices should imbibe like spiritual milk, a true zeal, a glowing ambition of achieving great things, of suffering great things for the

<sup>(4)</sup> *Ezech.* iii. 18.<sup>(5)</sup> *Prov.* x. 1.<sup>(6)</sup> *Prov.* xxix. 15.

salvation of souls, and unto this end he prescribes that in the novitiate each one should labor to acquire solid virtues, armed where-with he may become a fit instrument for the divine glory and for the winning of souls to God. And for those, who have entered on their course of studies, — just as he has expressly declared in the fourth part of the Constitutions “ the scope of the learning acquired in the Society should be to the profit of their own and their neighbors’ souls with the Divine grace,” as too he wished that they should, without ever losing sight of that end, embrace their studies with all earnestness “ from a motive of obedience and charity ;” and that, like generous and loyal soldiers, taking their Captain’s glory for their own, they should persuade themselves that they are winning their spurs even in camp during the time when, though not in battle with the foe, they are in a way preparing their arms to use them afterwards in the glorious enterprises for which they are in training. Likewise our holy Father, in one of his extant letters, seriously recommends to those who devote themselves to literature, that among other exercises of piety they should hold that to be far the most useful, whereby they daily make a full offering of themselves to God, and surrender themselves entirely into His hands, that so they may become more apt and reliable instruments for the salvation of souls, if it so be that He shall come to make use of them. And here, I urge upon all beseechingly — it is a thing which the last General Congregation declared it had much at heart — that, as far as may be, we make provision that these high thoughts of our holy Father fail not of accomplishment and that our younger brethren exhibit a tender love for their vocation by assiduous application to those branches of learning which are proper to the Society, and go not afield after studies foreign to our Institute, withdraw no point of time, no particle of industry from those in which they are engaged, in fine, foster within themselves the spirit of sincere and ardent charity, the spirit which renders us quick to undertake enterprises, and makes so much for the preservation of uprightness of heart and the securing to our manner of

action that religious modesty which our Society desires in all in an eminent degree. And surely in those who do so in the seed-time, that is, in the time of their studies, we shall see a rich harvest of merit and virtue by the good grace of God, "who ministereth seed to the sower and will increase the growth of the fruits of your justice." <sup>(7)</sup>

And here many things occur to me, which perhaps I should say on the office of teaching and which I could dilate upon at large. It is a duty which our holy Father esteemed most highly, and it has at all times been a source of honor to the Society and of profit to men. I remind Ours, therefore, that we must undertake this work both on account of a precept of the Institute and from a desire to instil Christian piety into the tender minds of those who are intrusted to our charge. Let them consider that God in great measure has put in their hands not only the education and innocence, but haply the predestination also, of as many souls as there are youths whom we instruct in letters. Let them all prove that they do not employ themselves in this occupation like hirelings; that they have not resolved to be sparing of their care and labor, but let them show themselves earnest workers imbued with the spirit of their holy Founder, and spare nothing which may at all help to the development in piety and scholarship of the youth intrusted to them.

Meantime, I earnestly beseech God, Who has chosen us for so glorious deeds, and Whose especial gift it is that we are able to be of service to His glory by our endeavor and labors, and so to seek an immense amount of merit for ourselves, that He will "give unto you the eyes of your heart enlightened that you may know what the hope is of his calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." <sup>(8)</sup> He has not, forsooth, called us to this Society in order that, when enrolled in this Company, we may lead an idle life of leisure in calm, bent solely upon our own interests and private schemes, at a time most of all when so many souls, fast becoming the sure prey of our infernal foe, im-

<sup>(7)</sup> II. Cor. ix. 10.

<sup>(8)</sup> Ephes. i. 18.



plore our help and assistance, but that with a sovereign contempt for all things else, and not hesitating to lay down life itself, we should hold it a shame not to run forth into the field and front of battle, where laurels are so thick. Now, if St. Bonaventure has without reservation called it the unconsciousness of criminal insensibility not to feel tormenting pain at the dread evils besetting our neighbor, at so many crimes offending God, how much the more is such insensibility to be reproached in one of the Society, who makes express profession of considering his neighbor's losses as his own, and of deploring the insults offered to God before all consideration of personal injury or loss ! For true, sincere zeal cannot escape this feeling at beholding so many sins become of common occurrence, so many souls brought to ruin, and on this account often takes to itself the cry of the Apostle, "I have great sadness and continual sorrow in my heart."<sup>(9)</sup> Hence our charity is not only fixed with a desire to meet these many great evils, which are an anguish to it, but, whereas it cannot repress this ardor, in the words of St. Bonaventure, "that it may not be listlessly idle, it strains every nerve, and summoning to its help the whole household that is subject to its bidding," that is to say, the thoughts, affections, vital strength, and in fine all the resources of the heart and brain, "it advances to the good work either of promoting good or removing evil." Wherefore, though it be true, as the same holy Doctor adds, that by the sole desires of the will we gain merit and fulfil our duty, as often as it lies not in our power to put them into execution, still it is also beyond all doubt that if the fault of failure be ours, we shall in vain flatter ourselves with such fruitless and empty aspirations, which, when we could and therefore ought, we still refused, to fulfil them in deed. "For where there's a will, there's a way," says St. Bonaventure most pithily, but the unwilling find no way.

How happy, moreover, would the Society be, if, while beholding the numbers of its sons so generously increased, it should also see in them all an unceasingly fervent spirit of their vocation. As-

(9) Rom. ix. 2.

surely it could have no fear lest, while the number of its members keeps daily growing, there also grow up in our houses that which our holy Father calls a rabble of men, so destructive, in his judgment, of the principles and growth of our Order. Nay, in point of fact and from experience he understood it to be absolutely impossible, if the increase were of laborers of approved spirit, of superior virtue and rare learning, for the spirit to wane and be weakened with the growth of numbers. Now unto this end each one of us must frequently and with due attention reflect before God on what he does and what he might yet do; and let him undertake much more and much higher things with confidence in God for whose glory he works, holding it certain that men for the most part can do more than they have become persuaded they can do through listening to self-love and obeying its promptings, "For they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall fly and shall not faint."<sup>(10)</sup>

So far we have examined the spirit of our vocation. It now remains for us to see its chief marks, whereby we may be able to recognize whether that spirit obtains in us, and, if we detect a falling off, that we may look to arousing it and restoring it to its pristine vigor. From what we have already said every one must see that the first mark is a love, whereby we willingly embrace the proper ministries of our vocation, and have an aversion for everything, of whatsoever kind it may be, which could withdraw us therefrom. For my part I frankly acknowledge my ignorance of how there can be room for idleness in a member of the Society, and am exceedingly surprised that there is anyone who thinks it a little matter in his religious obligations to waste time and opportunity in useless trifles, when he has offered himself wholly to God and has vowed his life to the salvation and interests of his neighbor. For what satisfaction could the Society take, if in the large numbers of her sons she should see not a few dawdling at their ease, who either like dastardly soldiers who have thrown away their arms, or like indolent workmen, "have gone aside" from

<sup>(10)</sup> Isa. xl. 31.

their vocation in neglect "and have become unprofitable."<sup>(1)</sup> It is true, indeed, that such leisure and immunity from all burdens whatsoever is hard to find among us, since there are many duties in which we are buried by the requirement of obedience. But, since these sometimes do not claim all our care and time, the balance of our time is surely given to idleness, if through striking effort we do nothing. Hence we must consider our criminal responsibility as great as the amount of good which we could have done and have not done. And truly I do not see how he can be thought guiltless, who professing this vocation, yet content with mediocrity either avoids the hard and obscure ministries altogether, or omits them in part; nor he who undertakes them not from any great zeal and true desire of the salvation of souls, but in order not to seem utterly to fail of his duty; nor lastly the one who, though he could do the work of many if he chose, does not from sloth and listlessness accomplish the work of even one. For this reason by the fault of some we rightly fall under the full blame of that disgrace, that, where of old three or four of Ours sufficed for the discharge of certain ministries, now not ten, nor even many more, are enough; and grant that these, whereas they have for the rest so much idle time on their hands, may not complain that they are burdened and oppressed with excessive toil!

Now if this shunning of labor runs into indifference of mind, as can readily happen, the matter has gone so far as to create a great evil and the greatest inconvenience to those with whom we live, and is of a nature such as cannot be at all tolerated in men of so holy a vocation. My dear Fathers and Brothers, we are on the lips and before the eyes of men. We are all under inspection, and men know well with what spirit each of us deals with them. And may they—it is the height of my desire—recognize in all the spirit of our forefathers, who never appeared in public without speaking of God and heavenly things. Whence it came to pass that all departed from them better men, and brought away with them an enhanced esteem of our members. Now this was so much a

<sup>(1)</sup> Ps. xiii. 3.



subject of provident thought with the last General Congregation that among the things which would most conduce to the development of this spirit, it decreed "that the external conduct of Ours, which ought to subserve the Divine glory and the good of souls, should be altogether religious;" while it laid on Superiors the obligation of seeing "whether Ours always spread abroad in their conduct the good odor of piety and edification."

Furthermore, a second mark of the true spirit of our vocation is to abhor utterly our own comfort and gain, which have but very little in common with that vocation which seeks solely the discomforts and labors of an Apostle and finds in these its glory. And that the more because such a disease of the soul, whereby we scheme studiously to get the best of everything for ourselves, the more despicable it is, so much the more disgraceful is it in men who profess that they are nailed to the cross with Christ and that they not only do not shrink from undergoing crosses for the salvation of souls, but even run to meet them. In addition, this insatiable greed of self-comfort by degrees saps all the vitality of the soul and makes the lightest work too burdensome. This is the daily experience of those who are the base slaves of self-love, for this love is like a flame which consumes all virtue, and its slaves are ever feeding a greedy fire which never cries "Hold—enough." But can it be possible that any one of the Society withdraws for so base a reason from the constant hearing of confessions, or from other such work which is undertaken for the salvation of souls for which Christ Himself did not hesitate to scorn all the comforts of life and sustain supreme suffering and sorrow? "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ hath died?"<sup>(12)</sup> Hence there is surely no reason why one who acts thus should be surprised, if those graces, wherewith the spirit is fed and fostered, are withdrawn from Him by God, Who most righteously inflicts this punishment on those who, made captive by the allurements of the senses, suffer themselves to be drawn away from the pursuit of the divine glory and honor. For against these, so

(12) I. Cor. viii. 11.

forgetful of their duty, has that been uttered which St. Bernard has called "a terrible and a ruthless threat:" "If thou know not thyself, go forth and feed thy kids."<sup>(13)</sup> "That is," he says, "know that thou art unworthy of the sweet familiar contemplation of things celestial, spiritual, divine. Wherefore go forth from my sanctuary, thine own heart, where thou wert wont sweetly to drink in the secret and sacred appreciations of truth and wisdom: and entangle thyself the more, like a soul from among worldlings, in feeding and flattering the senses of the flesh. Let mine eyes gush forth a flood of waters over such a soul, which, whereas it was brought up in scarlet, hath at last embraced the dung." However, to understand my purport there is need not so much of words as of serious meditation before God: enlightened by His light the mind may recognize the degradation of this state and may strive to arise from it and lift itself to immortal things, looking solely to things eternal and despising the things of earth and time, whereby it may come to win God for itself and many souls to God.

Having done away with all this that is wont to draw us off from our ministries and labors, a third mark follows, whereby the true spirit of our vocation is shown in this, if we despise perishable and earthly things which corrupt and destroy our work when directed to such end; such as to seek praise, applause, honor or any other prize of that kind as the reward of our labors. For how would it fare with such a workman, if after so much sweat and toil it should be told him in his dying moments that he was of those "who have received their reward?" Now can it be that any one of Ours prefers here before the time, to be compensated for those labors to which a "never-fading crown of glory"<sup>(14)</sup> has been pledged, and considers as a fair exchange for his reward either some nobler province or more honorable office, or an immunity from burdensome work, or in fine any temporal emolument of the kind, thinking in sooth that he can exact these as due to the labors which he has discharged in the Society, and demand them as his right? Of course Superiors should, as far as may be, in the distribution and

<sup>(13)</sup> Cant. i. 7.

<sup>(14)</sup> I Pet. v. 4.

assignment of each one's duties take account of constant religious modesty and of work accomplished, but God forbid that subjects should so demean themselves as to wish their labors to be compensated with so contemptible a hire. This surely would be both to incur the malediction of the Prophet and to wish their work, for that it rests on no roots of virtue and is utterly barren, to be likened to the "grass upon the tops of the houses, wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that gathereth sheaves, his bosom." <sup>(15)</sup> In this connection, as regards any kind of repayment whatever, I earnestly beseech all to show themselves true and legitimate sons of the Society, to recall the glorious deeds of our forefathers, who considered that that important part of the Constitutions which concerns poverty, should be preserved sound and secure forever: to wit, that we ought freely give what we have freely received; nay, they were the more affectionately attached to those duties wherein there was more of labor than of honor or human reward, and they by no means suffered themselves to be decoyed by these from laying up for eternity in accumulated and undrawn account the recompense of their efforts. But if you asked them the question which we know the Apostle was wont to ask himself, "what is my reward then?" <sup>(16)</sup> they could unhesitatingly answer with the Apostle that they reckoned it their highest reward to have received no reward—"that I may deliver the Gospel with no charge;" <sup>(17)</sup> and could profess freely and with truth with the same Apostle again,—“I preached unto you the gospel of God freely, for I seek not the things that are yours, but you.” <sup>(18)</sup>

Now no man can uplift himself to this perfection of zeal so pure and unalloyed, and attain thereunto, except one who accustoms himself to converse with God and surrenders himself to an unceasing practice of prayer; whereby it will come to pass that, despising all things earthly, he shall maintain with the Prophet,—“I beheld the earth, and lo it was void and nothing.” <sup>(19)</sup> This, my dear Fathers and Brothers, is the last and chief mark of the spirit of our

<sup>(15)</sup> Ps. cxxviii. 6. 7.

<sup>(16)</sup> I. Cor. ix. 18.

<sup>(17)</sup> I. Cor. ibid.

<sup>(18)</sup> II. Cor. xi. 7. xii. 14.

<sup>(19)</sup> Jer. iv. 23.



vocation, which I submit to your careful consideration, and I am exceedingly glad that this last part of my letter has turned thereon, because thus you may more deeply impress it upon your minds beyond all chance of forgetfulness. In this training school of prayer the spirit of the Society has been formed; in this school the spirit of the Society has been set round about with all the virtues and the characteristics of true zeal, which afterwards have contributed to the profit of souls and the common good of the Church. We may rest assured that our infernal arch-enemy, who sets in motion many devices for the destruction of this least Society, at whose hands he has met with so many defeats, makes it his chief effort to snatch from our hands our weapons of strength and safety, that is, constant prayer and other holy exercises, deprived of which we can neither withstand the onset of the attacking foe, nor undertake any great achievement for the glory of God; for the reason that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty to God unto the pulling down of fortifications."<sup>20</sup> And, in truth, even when equipped with the armor we must use the greatest care and watchfulness to preserve our religious fervor; for let us reflect with all seriousness what the outcome will be if we either neglect these resources altogether, or use them as if we were neglecting them? This is why our holy Father, in the tenth part of the Constitutions where he treats of the preservation and increase of the Society, has laid this down as a foundation on which all else rests. "Those means," he writes, "which bring the instrument in contact with God and dispose it to be duly guided by the divine hand, are more efficacious than those which put it in touch with men." Among these means, moreover, he reckoned as the chief, "intimacy with God in the spiritual practices of devotion and a sincere zeal for souls into His glory, Who has created and redeemed them, without regard for any other reward." The correct order of divine Providence demands, that they, whom God uses as His instruments for the sanctification of souls, should be more closely and intimately united with Himself Who rules all

(20) II. Cor. x. 9.

things ; not only that they may thus the more surely be used for the appointed end, but also that they may first learn from Him the method whereby they may best draw others to Him and win them to the sound of His voice. Hence we read in the Scriptures, "And he that heareth, let him say, Come!"<sup>(21)</sup> "Namely, that he" for so St. Gregory interprets the verse, "within whom the internal voice gently speaks, may, crying aloud, draw others also thither whither he is apt." Furthermore, as experience has proved, the words, which flow forth from the fountain of Divine fruitfulness, are different from those, which come from the construction and artifice of human ingenuity. For, as St. Bernard rightly notes, from words the inmost feelings of the soul are learned. Fear hath a sound of tremor ; sorrow of weeping, but joy of gladness. So in general "the affections have their own utterance, whereby they betray themselves even when they would not." Hence the soul full of God and fired by the constant practice of prayer moves the hearts of men otherwise than the cold and empty soul, even as it is written,—"The heart of the wise shall instruct his mouth, and shall add grace to his lips."<sup>(22)</sup>

Let us give ourselves up without reserve, my dear Fathers and Brothers, to this sublime and indispensable practice of prayer, that thus we may make acknowledgement, far better than I can in words, of the sublimity of our vocation, and of the characteristics of its spirit, which is ever busied with some enterprise, is not broken by labor, never loses thought of the salvation of souls, and is altogether a stranger to idleness, comfort, and all personal profit. In consequence this acknowledgement will be followed by a burning desire to fulfil the bond wherewith we pledged ourselves to God, and to discharge the obligations which we took on us when we embraced this our profession ; a profession, I repeat, enriched with the most abundant merits here, and fraught in eternity with rewards far and away the most exalted beyond all estimate of human reason. And we should not lose heart. God, Who has with singular love called us to this Society, will be by us with His grace, if we will

<sup>(21)</sup> Apoc. xxii. 17.

<sup>(22)</sup> Prov. xvi. 23.

but hear His words,—“Do manfully and be of good heart; for the Lord thy God himself is thy leader, and will not leave thee nor forsake thee.”<sup>(23)</sup> Keep steadily in view the glorious deeds of our forefathers. Let us recall to mind our vocation and remember that we have been set as their successors with a view to keep flourishing the spirit of the Society for the good of mankind, that we, I say, even as we shall be sharers of their labors, so too shall we be sharers of their reward in the blessed life everlasting: “For we are the children of saints, and look for that life which God will give to those that never change their faith from Him.”<sup>(24)</sup> Let us set before our eyes that day of strictest judgment, which shall overtake the unsuspecting, and wherein God will demand a reckoning from each one of us of the talents which He has intrusted to us with the words, “Trade till I come.”<sup>(25)</sup> But if on casting up our accounts we shall find that as yet we have gained but little and therefore are in no wise comparable with those earnest laborers of the Society, who shall offer to God kingdoms and cities brought to good living, the sweat they have outpoured, the discomforts endured, the dangers faced, the wounds received, and death itself undergone for charity, let us ask ourselves on thus contrasting ourselves with our Brothers, “What shall we poor wretches have to say, who after our trafficking return to our Lord empty-handed, we who have been called shepherds, and have not guided our flocks.” With these serious considerations let us break every bond of sloth and earthly attachment, and recall ourselves to that high-souled spirit of our vocation. Let us take pains to lay up new merits from day to day, and let us spend in multiplying, as fast as we may, our good works as much time as we know that we have wasted unprofitably, looking to one thing only, “that we walk worthy of the vocation in which we are called.”<sup>(26)</sup>

It will be of great help to this end, which I have so much at heart, if each one of you withdrawing himself for some days from intercourse with men, con over his ways in the sight of the Lord, and weigh his works in His scales, attentively meditating what

<sup>(23)</sup> Deut. xxx. 16.<sup>(24)</sup> Tob. ii. 18.<sup>(25)</sup> Luke xix. 13.<sup>(26)</sup> Ephes. iv. 1.



is the hope of my vocation, and whereby may gather new strength and renew his early fervor. If this be done, I trust in God that, each one of us renewing his spirit, the Society also in these days of difficulty for the Christian economy may see a renewal of industry in our ministries and the restoration of the pursuit of our own perfection, and so gathering greater strength may flourish anew. For we are taught by experience how much the spirit of true zeal contributes to adorning the soul in short space with all other virtues, not only because the soul is in a measure softened by constant meditation on the virtues, but also because it is made far richer and more fertile by the dew of Divine blessings. Wherefore in consonance with this view was it written, "The soul which blesseth, shall be made fat; and he that inebriateth, shall be inebriated also himself:"<sup>(27)</sup> words whose meaning we learn from St. Gregory to be,— "He who blesseth by preaching without, receives the fatness of interior growth: and while he ceases not to inebriate the minds of his hearers with the wine of eloquence, he grows inebriated himself with the draught of manifold gifts." Hence in laborers of this kind perfect obedience, true humility, contempt of self, sincere charity towards all, the exact observance of religious discipline, and, in fine, the splendor of all religious virtues shine forth, on account of which they may be lifted up to a far more exalted degree of glory in heaven, which they shall obtain, who shall come thither by the same holy means.

Therefore, to come to a close, with that affection of soul which in a high degree and an especial manner I owe and profess to all, I pray a full bounty of heavenly blessings on the whole Society and on all its members, asking that in return they all ask from God in prayer the same for me, in order that I may fulfil the duties of the office imposed on me for the glory of God and the spiritual advancement of all of Ours and of our neighbor. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen."<sup>(28)</sup>

Your Servant in Christ,

ALOYSIUS CENTURIONE.

*Rome,*

*July 29, 1756.*

<sup>(27)</sup> Prov. xi. 25.

<sup>(28)</sup> II. Cor. xiii. 13.

## XIII.

A LETTER OF VERY REV. FATHER LAURENCE RICCI TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS ON CEASELESS FERVOR IN PRAYER AMID THE MISFORTUNES OF THE SOCIETY.

Although the unabated harshness of our sufferings alone even yet appeals to us to be untiring in the fervor of our prayers, still "I think it meet to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."<sup>(1)</sup> And this I do not because divine Providence bids us to be humble, though at the same time, diligent seekers and interpreters of its counsels, but also because some since their personal comforts have suffered but little, if at all, pass over the common calamity with unbecoming levity of mind. Others, again, regarding only the scourge, which is visible, regard not the invisible hand that inflicts the chastisement. Nay, it even happens that the burden of our evils, though it grow heavier with the lapse of time, begets a lethargy by the very length of its duration, as though our souls were rendered callous, whether because we perceive not that to which we are inured, or because the soul readily accustoms itself to evils for which it despairs of finding a remedy.

But far from us, dear Fathers and Brothers, be such hardness of heart. For this it is, which cheats God's fatherly counsels of their design, which wrests from us the glorious reward of patience, and withdraws us from the assistance afforded by christian piety, which, if we but availed ourselves of it tirelessly and steadfastly, would at last so work on the divine mercy as to change our very sorrow into joy. Wherefore, to use the words of the Apostle, "forget never the words of consolation"<sup>(2)</sup> in which God exhorts you to patience, while He addresses you as His dearest sons: "My son, reject not the correction of the Lord: and do not faint when thou art chastised by Him."<sup>(3)</sup> And it is unseemly, that misfortune should destroy or even ruffle that composure, by which the misfor-

<sup>(1)</sup> II. Pet. i. 13.<sup>(2)</sup> Hebr. xii. 5.<sup>(3)</sup> Prov. iii. 11.

tune must be borne ; for " it is just to be subject to God." <sup>(4)</sup> This trial, as coming from God, is pleasing to Him ; and this should be enough to induce each of us to receive it not merely without complaint and humbly, but even with pleasure, casting our will in the mould of the Divine will. And, in truth, what can we wisely and profitably desire, if it be not what God wills. And is there aught that can please us, beyond what is pleasing to God.

Now this agreement between our will and God's designs is so far from dulling our sense of grief, that it rather proves the presence of this grief in our souls. For how can he make a pleasing gift-offering to God, in whom the habit of sorrow has deadened and robbed it of its pang? Nor does the divine help destroy this grief, for its only effect is to make us staunch and steadfast in patience ; and such is its wondrous power, that with the interior troubles of the soul it mingles unspeakable comfort, so that in the fulness of heavenly delights it draws from every holy soul these words of the Apostle : " I am filled with comfort, I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation." <sup>(5)</sup>

Furthermore, as christian conformity to the divine will does not blunt the keenness of our suffering, so neither should it despoil our prayers of their fervor. For Christ, our true Teacher, after proposing this humble manner of prayer, " thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," straightway added this other : " give us this day our daily bread ;" to teach us that we must beg even temporal aid of our heavenly Father.

Hence, dear Fathers and Brothers, since we must look for " help from the Lord, who made heaven and earth," <sup>(6)</sup> and from none other will it come, to Him let us have recourse. Let the complaints of our heart again rise to His throne of grace, and let our lips pour forth prayers afresh, while we tarry not to cry out : " return, O Lord, and be entreated in favor of Thy servants." <sup>(7)</sup> Let us not fail to implore with greater fervor and earnestness that, if nothing is due to our merits, He would at least be mindful of His wonted mercy, and that finally He would hearken to the entreaties

<sup>(4)</sup> II. Mach. ix. 12.

<sup>(5)</sup> II. Cor. vii. 4.

<sup>(6)</sup> Ps. cxv. 2.

<sup>(7)</sup> Ps. lxxxix. 13.



of His servants and yield to their sighs. Wherefore, I wish and enjoin that all Ours practise during the coming year those exercises of piety, which were followed in the years just passed, namely : the daily recital of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Triduum of Prayer before her chief feasts, and a daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

And the practice of these devotions is extremely easy, nay, agreeable even, while it is suited to advance the private interests of each. It is agreeable. For to whom is it not sweet to call on Mary's name? Who finds not the presence of Jesus Christ most sweet? I fear not then that anyone will pass by this duty with neglect. But of this you should be mindful, that your prayers are the more acceptable to God and the more powerful to move Him to mercy, as your holiness is greater and your virtue loftier. "The just cried, and the Lord heard them," says the Royal Prophet, "and delivered them out of all their troubles;"<sup>(8)</sup> and in Proverbs we read: "the Lord will hear the prayers of the just."<sup>(9)</sup> Nay, we ourselves in asking the aid of prayers follow the common opinion of the faithful; for we have greater confidence in those, in whom we discover greater holiness of life. And we choose those men as our advocates before God, whom we deem more pleasing in His sight, while we pass over those, who are merely members of Christ's household, and possess no marked virtue to commend them.

It is, moreover, my earnest wish that your prayers wear this character, that they be adorned and armed with holiness of life. And though this quality may be regarded as exterior to prayer, still from it prayer derives its intrinsic value, since it belongs to a devout and holy soul, and not to the lukewarm and sluggish to interweave humility, trustfulness, and perseverance with its prayers. And if each and every son of the Society were fervent in God's service, if God could look on us, His companions, as the friends of His soul, could there be anything, I ask of you, could there be anything too precious for the united entreaties of the whole Society to hope and justly claim from the Divine goodness? How

<sup>(8)</sup> Ps. xxxiii. 18.

<sup>(9)</sup> Prov. xv. 29.

swift the flight of our prayer to the throne of God, how sure of winning instant favors would it be, if, when all gather together for the daily adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, or for the recital of the Litany, at that same hour prayers were poured forth by men, who detest from the depth of their hearts those pleasures, which the world loves and embraces, renown and honors, and, on the other hand, welcome and desire all that Christ loved and embraced, contempt, poverty, suffering ; men, whose chief and most earnest endeavor is to seek in all things the greater denial of self ; who have a right intention not only in their state of life, but in all particulars ; who are alert to hasten, at the least sign of the Superior, whithersoever God's greater service calls them ; who, in fine, burn with that fire which Christ "came to cast on the earth."<sup>(10)</sup> And tell me now, if it be possible for God, who hearkens to the prayers of one faithful servant, to disregard the desires of so many men who piously supplicate Him.

But such men should we be in our prayer and such men our Rules require us to be. Those Rules at which I have just hinted, are the essential foundation of our Institute and their observation calls for more than common zeal and labor. I am well aware that we may not expect nor demand the same perfection from all. But I know, also, that all can yield great fruit, according to the measure of God's grace imparted to them ; and truly lavish is the outpouring of God's grace upon all. And besides, our state of life obliges one and all to aspire to the highest degree of perfection. I know, it is true, and know it to my sorrow, that within the large household of religious persons may be found the lukewarm and the slothful, because of some unchangeable destiny and the weakness of human nature. I know "it must needs be," according to the divine oracle of Christ, "that scandals come ;"<sup>(11)</sup> but let those careless religious, especially those who, as St. Jerome says, "by their own fault bring it to pass, that, what must of necessity take place in the world, should happen by their means," let them, I say, recall those further words of Christ and seriously ponder

<sup>(10)</sup> Luke xii. 42.

<sup>(11)</sup> Matt. xviii. 7.

them : "but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh."

To restrict my theme, however, to narrower limits, I shall touch on three kinds of virtues, which I would commend before all others. Not that I propose to speak at length of them, but they contain practical suggestions which are most useful in obtaining that favor for which we pray. And it may be that God wishes some among us to cultivate these virtues with greater perfection, while His readiness to hear our prayers depends on the fostering of these virtues according to His will.

Let me begin then with humility. You know well, dear Fathers and Brothers, that God, by means of His servant St. Ignatius, has called and destined us for the task of securing and enhancing His glory. Now, if in our labors we fixedly regard our personal renown as our only end and put God's glory below it, who would buoy himself up with the flattering hope that God will guard the well-being of the Society with a father's care, or that St. Ignatius would address earnest entreaties to the divine Majesty to preserve unshaken the work which he has founded? Assuredly then, the Society would become that salt which has lost its savor, which "is good for nothing any more but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men."<sup>(12)</sup>

And let us not be led astray by the glory of the Society. True, we should keep ceaseless watch over this glory of the Society, and spare no efforts to further it, but with the sole purpose of yielding our neighbor more ample aid and of bringing into being a power more efficacious in extending the glory of God. The glory of the Society is to be guarded by purity of life, by holy conversations, by unwearied zeal for the salvation of souls; not by repulsive self-praise, not by obloquy, not by contempt of others. Besides, it is greatly to be feared that, beneath the cloak of a praiseworthy desire for the renown of the body, hides the ill-ordered longing of the individual, since we rejoice at no public honor save that, which

<sup>(12)</sup> Matt. v. 13.



is the outcome of personal glory, and we hold the reputation earned by others for the body as cheap, if our private gain is not increased.

It is, indeed, easy to say : " For the honor and glory of God." But would that it were as easy to labor for God's glory. Even in those holy words, something of vain glory lingers ? He, who would work for this end, must unquestionably disregard his own comfort, put aside all personal distinction, that he may forget himself and make God alone his aim. Finally, we shall never with honest hearts pray God to glorify His holy name, if we do not also pray with David that glory be denied to us : " not to us, O Lord, not to us ; but to Thy Name give glory." <sup>(13)</sup>

Poverty is the second virtue, which seems most helpful in attaining the purpose of our prayer. It is the emblem of Christ, " that, being rich, he became poor ;" <sup>(14)</sup> hence He began His teachings on the mount with the evangelical counsels on voluntary poverty : " Blessed are the poor in spirit !" <sup>(15)</sup> Hence we see that poverty should be the characteristic mark, by which Christ's companions are to be distinguished. And by none other did the very Apostles avow themselves His followers and friends : " Behold we have left all things, and have followed Thee." <sup>(16)</sup> Our prayers must, therefore, enter heaven with this character stamped upon them, that St. Ignatius may welcome them as the supplications, not of strangers, but of his sons, that he may present them to the supreme Deity and strive with confidence to secure their fulfilment. Prayers adorned with the mark of poverty will be the sterling coin of true ring to purchase for the Society the fond protection of Christ, our Saviour.

It is true that we have vowed poverty to God with the aim of imitating Christ. But it would seem bound within rather narrow limits, did it go no further than the privation of dominion and subjection to the Superiors in our use of things, without the desire of experiencing some of the effects of poverty. For if, after imprinting kisses on the wounds of Christ crucified, if, after shedding tears of tender pity at sight of Christ suffering, we turn our eyes

<sup>(13)</sup> Ps. cxiii. 9.

<sup>(14)</sup> II. Cor. viii. 9.

<sup>(15)</sup> Matt. v. 3.

<sup>(16)</sup> Matt. xix. 27.

once more on Him and compare His poverty with our own, we shall with reason hide our faces and hang our heads in shame. And many are the holy souls, and more closely resembling the Divine image than we, who have felt what has been described. At least may our poverty go so far as to bear privations without complaint. Let it be contented with the food given us in the Society and, according to the provision of the rule, with furniture suited to poor men. Let it maintain in all things religious simplicity and reject with steadfastness whatever is tainted with the luxury and pleasures of the world. Let it shun all singularity, and avoid everything that is not necessary, considering as superfluous whatever falls not within our uses. To this degree of perfection, which all should reach, as it is neither too lofty nor too difficult, all will find it easy to ascend, if we meditate with all seriousness on the poverty, which Christ thought it no dishonor to embrace, and if moved at so stirring an example we enkindle a love of that same poverty within our hearts.

Last comes that virtue, by which St. Ignatius wished that the Society should be distinguished from other religious orders, as by a special badge, I speak of perfect obedience. I shall not make bold to discuss this question. For the Founder of our Society, in that wonderful letter of his, has explained so clearly its nature, distinguished its different degrees, taught the method of practising it, and pointed out the means of gaining it, and has even furnished us with the reasons and motives, which most powerfully attract us to its exercise. It will be enough, then, for me to warn you in passing, that you fall not into error in a matter of such serious import.

Our blessed Father remarks that it is not at all forbidden to inform the Superior, if our opinion should in anything differ from his. And in the Constitutions he makes the clear declaration for all, that when they observe that something is harmful to them, or that something else is necessary in food, clothing, occupation, or lodging, it is permitted to acquaint the Superior of the matter. I am willing, dear Fathers and Brothers, that you enjoy so just and

prudent, and fatherly an indulgence. Yet I entreat you, never to forget in its use the cautions which encompass it. For you know, from the teaching of St. Ignatius himself, that whenever our private judgment is opposed to the ordinations of the Superior, we are in great danger of being deceived by self-love. Therefore, we must ask of the Father and Giver of lights, whether or not it is becoming and expedient to lay such matters before the Superior. But our prayer must be neither hurried nor troubled, but calm and prepared to hear and welcome the Divine Voice. Again, we should not consider the deceitful whisperings of our desires as the small and gentle divine voice. We must preserve, moreover, before and after manifesting our own opinion, that composure which our holy Founder so earnestly enjoins, not only in execution and will, but even in the judgment. And this indifference and evenness of mind will not seem hard to those, who recognize the will of God in the command of their Superior.

Moreover, should you meditate opposition of any sort to the voice of obedience, recall to mind the other teachings of St. Ignatius. Observe that he everywhere enforces this lesson of not resisting, contradicting, nay, even of not disclosing the least disagreement between the Superior's judgment and our own. He would not have us wait for the Superior's formal command, but counsels an alert compliance with the slightest expression of his will ; a sober striving never to bend the Superior's will to our will, but of leaving to him the unrestrained disposal of ourselves and of all we have ; the casting our wills into the mould of the Superior's wherever sin, and this is always to be understood, is not enjoined ; the obeying with readiness, constancy, and due humility, without murmur or excuse, when anything is commanded that is hard and displeasing to self-love.

Let us remember those apt comparisons of an old man's staff, and of a dead body, which show the docility of a religious whose obedience is genuine. Let us not forget those examples of the ancient hermits, which were proposed both for our encouragement and our admiration ; for, at the command of their Superior, they



directed their will and endeavors to the performance not merely of useless things, but of impossibilities.

Finally, if there is any question of assailing the judgment of the Superior, call to mind, I beg of you, those reasons, as sweet as they are powerful, with which St. Ignatius urges and spurs us on to the practice of perfect obedience. "What shame," he says, "what shame for religious men to obey for any human end! May God withdraw from you so vain and so unworthy an aim! Let the love of God be the sole cause of obedience. By obedience you wholly restore to Him the liberty He granted to you. What is given to God is perfected, and perishes not. For we profess and yield obedience rather to God than man, since man is nothing more than God's minister, and the living instrument through which God makes known His will to us. It is this virtue, which the Holy Spirit highly extols in the Sacred Scriptures, which God has sealed with His approval by miracles. All holy men have practised this obedience and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself embracing it for our instruction has left us examples of this virtue so truly marvellous. Perfect obedience will beget in your souls all other virtues, and uniting you all together by the sweet bond of charity, it will bring to you that calm and joy of spirit, which the self-willed know not, and can never know. It is this which paves the way for advancement in every virtue and in God's service, which will lead your minds to the true knowledge and your hearts to the true love of God. It will guide and govern you in the journeying of this life, and conduct you to a most happy end, to bliss everlasting.

Here, dear Fathers and Brothers, you recognize not the thoughts alone, but the very words of your most loving Father, Saint Ignatius. His sole aim through life was to bring each of you, by the straight way of perfection to a high degree of glory in heaven. And as on earth, so from the grandeur of his heavenly throne does he entreat and implore you to bend all your energies to the effect of acquiring obedience and to prove yourselves peerless in that virtue. Never disregard so sweet an appeal nor the

memory of his teachings. But let them be forever before your eyes, especially when you are inclined to resist the Superior's commands ; for they will preserve you from all error and from the illusions of your own judgment.

May these virtues especially be the eloquent pleaders of our prayers before the high court of heaven, before the great white throne of God. For if prayer be not accompanied by virtue, we separate ourselves from God by a thick cloud, that hinders our prayers, as Jeremias says : " thou hast set a cloud before thee, that our prayer may not pass through." <sup>(17)</sup> Rather let our prayer, surrounded and sustained by virtues, be of that kind, which, according to St. James the Apostle "availeth much," if it be "continual." <sup>(18)</sup> For it will be the entreaty of those just men, "whose salvation," in the words of the Holy Spirit, "is from the Lord ;" <sup>(19)</sup> and God "is their Protector in the time of trouble." <sup>(20)</sup> He withdraws not His eyes from them, but keeps their paths, blesses their habitations, guides them in the way and strengthens their weakness. After such a preparation, dear Fathers and Brothers, offer your prayer. And pray rather that I and all of Ours may gain these virtues than that these present misfortunes pass away from us. For we shall ever be contented with our lot, if, with the Apostle, we can give ourselves this assurance : "whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." <sup>(21)</sup>

I commend myself earnestly, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers, to your Sacrifices and prayers.

The servant of all in Christ,

LAURENCE RICCI.

*Rome,*

*November 13, 1743.*

<sup>(17)</sup> Jerem. Lam. iii. 44.

<sup>(18)</sup> James v. 16.

<sup>(19)</sup> Ps. xxxvi. 39.

<sup>(20)</sup> Ib.

<sup>(21)</sup> Rom. xiv. 8.

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XIV.

LETTER OF REV. FR. JOHN ROTHAAAN TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS ON THE LOVE OF OUR SOCIETY AND INSTITUTE.

Even in the very first days that saw my weak shoulders burdened with the government of the Society, I had made up my mind, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, in harmony, as I well knew, with my own duty and with your wishes, to address you all, as best I might, and urge on first myself and then all of you to satisfy with renewed zeal and renewed labor the great debt to God and our neighbor put upon us by our vocation. Such was my intention then ; and now that the first year of my generalship has come nigh to its end, I have determined to put it at length into execution. For I could not feel that I had acquitted myself of my duty, even though I had sent many a letter to Provincial or local Superiors, or others of you, as time and events found it necessary or helpful, unless I should likewise speak to you all in common according to the good old custom of those who have gone before us. Of all the topics which suggested themselves as profitable for such a purpose one above all was most to my liking for its common interest, its broad bearing, and its especial fitness for the Society of our day. Therefore, it was that I have resolved to set forth as a help to all what I have at heart together with you, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, concerning the love of our vocation and Institute.

It is, however, by no means my intention to spur you on to acquire this love of our Society and Institute, for such a task is, as I take it, uncalled for and assuredly unnecessary, but rather would I suggest something on the manner in which each one of us should show forth in deeds, that love which he has. And though what I say, may not seem of pressing need, it surely will be, as I am fully persuaded, not only apt for the times but of the greatest help for us all.



Indeed, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, it has always been our Society's peculiar good fortune to see all those who have been called to her ranks by the grace of God, cling to her most closely, love her with a whole-hearted affection, weigh her successes and failures in the same balance with their own, nay, in a word, hold the Society a treasure more precious than their very life. Yes, such love from her members has ever been the peculiar, the unique good fortune of our Society ; and her enemies have not once only made that very love a cause of accusation, turning into matter for condemnation what should justly have been a theme of praise. Why, so deep down in the hearts of her children had this warm love fixed itself that even when the whole Society through violence had ceased to be, one and all with the exception of a very few who were looked upon as monsters amid so many thousands, one and all never wavered in their loving allegiance to the Society even in her very death. And when the Society was recalled to life by Pius the Seventh, him of immortal memory, the most of those who still survived the fate that had overtaken all, weighed down though they were with the burden of years and worn out with toil, yet had no greater joy of heart than to hasten to the side of their loving mother as to a haven of refuge, offering themselves with the ardor of renewed youth to the most irksome duties. If, however, some there were who because of age or health or other obstacles were unable to do this, they with the love of children helped on the rising Society with the greatest zeal and many deeds of kindness. Such was the love of our vocation that we are proud to recognize in those who have gone before us, such is the love, I have no reason to doubt, which has now deep roots in the hearts of all of you, and that such love be ever the characteristic of Ours and their blessing for all time should be the earnest prayer of us all.

However a few remarks of some importance presented themselves to my mind to tell you the way in which we should put our love of the Society into practice. For I fear that this love is either wrongly understood by some, at times, or comes off ill in the prac-

tice ; and the upshot of it all is that in place of the good these people looked for, great harm which they would not, by some deplorable misfortune, visits the Society.

The first mistake of many in this matter which occurs to me as being likely to take possession of our minds with sad consequences, is that of those whose sole wish it is to see the Society grow as much as possible and increase in houses, colleges, and residences ; who deem that the Society is supremely prosperous if in a short time it is spread far and wide. This is surely in itself a wish worthy of all praise and the fruit of a heart full of love for our mother, the Society ; and, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, no one more than myself longs to have our Society scattered up and down the length and breadth of the land toiling for God's glory and the neighbor's good. Would to God such a state of things would straightway come to be, nay, would it were so even now ! But the avoidance of a rash haste is of such great need here that, if prudence be not had, nothing would more effectually, nothing would more quickly bring the Society to the brink of ruin. For, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, were our Society, which has but lately come again into life and has not as yet entered upon its manhood, to reach out for more burdens than its present strength could well bear, and were the young men of the Society forced to take up the most important works of our Institute while as yet not fully trained, what, tell me, would be the outcome of such a course of action. Not unlike, I fancy, what we perceive in the human body ; for if this be overgrown or strained beyond its strength, it becomes in the one case weak and nerveless, then declines, and is hurried to an untimely death. So, too, if houses and colleges and residences would be multiplied before men can be supplied fit to be at the head of studies or spiritual matters, before masters are at hand capable of forming the youth in learning and piety, if we were forced to use our young men and newcomers for duty before they have grasped the truths which embody the Society's true end and means, or what is worst of all, before they know how to lead a life in keeping with our vocation, if such

things were to happen, the health of the Society would be shattered, and though weakened it might perhaps keep the name, in reality it would cease to be the Society of Jesus.

I protest, if anyone is of the opinion that a life befitting a member of the Society consists in some show of virtue and a certain sentiment for what is right and good, he is making a fearful mistake. Sublime, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, will be the ideal of our life, if we do but grasp the idea which moved St. Ignatius in founding the Society. Our life is not one in which we are perfect, as soon as we enter it ; or such as can be picked up and put on with the habit of the Society, but one that demands of us above all a lifelong mortification of our old selves as a condition to the realization of a new self. For though our outer life is ordinary and differs in little from that of good priests, yet other and higher things than from mere priests are required of us by God, looked for by men, and exacted of us by our Institute.

Wherefore, I advise the Fathers who are possessed of high authority in their Provinces and most of all the Provincials, and beg of them through the Heart of Christ as they love the welfare of the Society, not to dream of opening new houses or colleges nor to offer the slightest encouragement to those who are urgent in asking for such, before they have at their command subjects enough to whom the works of the Society and chiefly the duty of governing may be entrusted in all safety. Let us ever, I pray of you all, keep well before us, first the life and welfare of the Society and then its works ; first the training of our own and then their labor and the fruits of their labor, first the inner life and then the outer ; and let us bring it home to our hearts that we are not looking to the interest of the Society, or to the glory of God, or to the good of the neighbor, when we send forth to do battle before the world men, who are not up to the mark in virtue and learning, men who when time has disclosed their deficiencies and when the hopes placed in them by the Society have been deceived, will be themselves exposed to the greatest danger and will bring shame on the Society. Would I could say that some Provinces of the Society



have not already felt to some greater or less extent the weight of these evils in having been unavoidably forced to comply with the pressing desires of princes or people. It will be of help to us in this matter to remember the saying of the wise man: "Substance got in haste shall be diminished: but that which by little and little is gathered with the hand, shall increase."<sup>(1)</sup>

Akin to the mistake of which I have been speaking, is another that induces some through love of the Society, as they imagine, to seek especially for whatever has the greatest show and bids fair to win the applause of savants and make Ours renowned in the eyes of the world. Such men would wish, I fancy, to persuade their mother to that course of action which vain men of old would have imposed on our Savior. "Show yourself to the world, show yourself to the world." These men deceived, I fear, by some specious reasoning, would rather have us seem than really be something, and think more of show than they do of solidity, more of notoriety than fair deeds, more of glittering tinsel than true sterling gold. Our lot is cast in a time when good appearances alone find favor in the eyes of many and are thought more of than the solid helps, which make for man's welfare. If, however, we must needs concede something to the times to render our services less distasteful, far be it from us to take up with any showy emptiness, whether in the pursuit of letters or in the preaching of the word of God. Such vanity is much opposed to the spirit of the Society, whose whole aim is ever the good of the neighbor and the glory of God, not the praise of men which is deceitful and insincere and soon changes to contempt, if it be anything else than the outcome of merit. When our Fathers won the praises of men, they earned them without seeking them by their glorious deeds and their deeds it should be our honor to ambition and imitate. Indeed, all renown and good repute then only will be to the credit of the Society, when we labor to help all classes of men in a spirit fully in keeping with our vocation, by a life of uncommon virtue, by genuine knowledge and by works proper to our Institute so

<sup>(1)</sup> Prov. xiii. 11.

that, come what praise there may for what we have well done, we at least shall not have sought after the empty voices of unmeaning applause.

Here comes for consideration another evil which I would fain keep far from all of us, which by itself would shut off from the Society the abundance of God's good gifts if, God forbid, it should find a home in the hearts of Ours. It has not escaped you, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, how often our people have been accused of pride and vain-glory and how often it has been harped on that the men of the Society, most humble though they have been individually, have nevertheless been most proud with regard to the Society in common and have been prone to look down upon those not of the Society, to belittle their merits, to envy their success, to care nothing for what has been done by others than Ours and, in a word, to act as if they imagined that all learning, all virtue, all real service for God and the neighbor were found in the Society alone. I am not indeed ignorant that these charges are utterly unfounded with regard to our men commonly, and have been unjustly trumped up with a view to bring hatred on the Society; yet, if one only among us were of this mind, I would consider it cause enough for the deepest grief and would apprehend great harm for the whole Society through the fault of one of its members. What, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ! is there anyone who can bring himself to think that a course of action which would be a disgrace and a fault before God for the individual, will be justified, will be expressive of love for the Society, if followed out in the name of the Society? When Venerable Bede was of the opinion that the Church of Christ was called by its founder, "little flock" because "by whatever numbers its ranks were to be swelled, it was to go on increasing in humility to the end of the world and reach unto the promised kingdom through humility," how much more becoming is it for every congregation which is but a small part of the Church, to cherish such humble feelings? What shall we say of our Society in this regard? Our holy Founder was wont to call it "the least" and

since the Society is wholly bent on imitating the humility of its Captain, Christ, it has been furnished with such instructions by its Founder that it professes not merely to hold aloof from the praises of the world and ecclesiastical honors, but even to despise them. When the first Fathers of the Society, great and glorious men, and most deserving in the eyes of God and man, heard certain predictions of holy men applied to them by the common people, never for a moment were they led to believe that such flattering and honorable sayings could refer to them. The more numerous and signal the benefits they conferred on the whole Christian world, the more often they repeated to themselves the words of the Gospel : " We are unprofitable servants : we have done that which we ought to do." And now that we are wanting in so many things and few in numbers and surely far below our Fathers in merit, will anyone dare cherish feelings of pride, or ought he not rather fear that the Society be humbled through his fault, for the saying of eternal truth will remain forever : " Every one who exalts himself will be humbled?" Or who is so rash as to imagine that when there is question of a company of men, the opposite opinion is to be held, namely that the more such a company exalts itself, the more God will exalt it by rich gifts and blessings, I fear much that those who speak most of the glory of the Society, as they call it, and who make the glory of the Society their sole theme, I fear that they will not be very unlike certain people who boast of the high rank of their family in the world, but are themselves unworthy scions and very poor imitators of the glory of their ancestors. Thus one will sometimes see men lauding to the skies the association they belong to and deeming themselves more than rich enough in the honors their predecessors have won, while they never dream of adding glory to them by their own endeavors, nay, they fancy those very honors entitle them to lead a life of ease and repose.

With regard now to such unworthy laborers among us as are eaten up with jealousy because of the honors and successes of others outside the Society, they could do, in my opinion, nothing more opposed to our calling. Is not the greater glory of God, the



scope, the goal of our whole life, of all our studies, of all our labors? And if we are sincere in such a purpose, should not every successful work for the glory of God, whosoever does it, be matter of congratulation for us? God grant the day when all religious of whatever Order and all men of apostolic life will strive together as one man for the good of the Church with all the strength they are capable of and with the most complete success! Truly the times are such and the needs of the Christian States so great that as many as toil the world over for the success of God's cause, were their numbers and powers increased by God, yet would all of them have opportunity to do work of no little fruit for God and the Church. "I am partaker with all them that fear thee, Lord." Thus that faithful servant of God thought and spoke, and who does not feel that the true sons of the Society should think and speak in like manner?

However, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, I cannot bring myself to believe that anyone of you would display his love of the Society by a course of action which is in open conflict with the spirit of the Society. Yet, I wished to touch on these points which are often brought against our men in these carping times, that each one of us may keep aloof in word and deed from even the suspicion of pride or jealousy, that Ours in all lands may love and honor those who have taken up and forward the cause of God, that they may cherish with becoming reverence and sincere affection the members of every other religious family and, especially, of such Orders as for centuries before the Society made glorious the Church of God by their learning and meritorious deeds and have never ceased to deserve well of the Church; in a word, I have said what I have, that Ours may keep in mind that humility and charity are the chief glories of our Society and that they should not appear to bear such a love to the Society as is opposed to her teaching, such as would harm rather than help her, such as would impede rather than hasten her growth or such as would utterly destroy her.

Enough has now been said of the love of the Society as it is

falsely understood, and we shall go on to consider in what this love truly consists and how it is to be put in practice and proved by all of Ours.

Everything to be said on this point is contained in that simple truth which our blessed Founder took from human philosophy and applied to divine, and which the golden book of the Exercises, whose study, aye, and whose constant use would that all of Ours had as much at heart as it deserved, sets forth thus : love which should be shown more in works than in words, consists in the sharing of one another's goods.

I will run through briefly the benefits that have come to us from the Society and the great and priceless possessions she has shared with us that we may the more easily understand what is owing to the Society on our part. For it is unbecoming in us not to know "the things that are given us from God,"<sup>(2)</sup> and though it be wrong to put the Society above other religious Orders, yet we are not for that reason prevented from exalting her gifts in the Lord with grateful hearts.

What then does the Society share with us ? Let us consider this question, I beg of you, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, and rejoice and congratulate ourselves because of our vocation, which by itself has been the source of the greatest good to us.

The Society has shared with us her end by which she is wholly taken up in zealously bringing about the salvation and perfection, first indeed of her own children, and then of all others to the ever greater glory of God. This end and purpose lend such a grandeur and dignity to this kind of life that, as our holy Founder has truly observed, nothing more sublime could be found among men or angels. This end wonderfully ennobles all our actions and even the most trivial duties done in the spirit of our Institute, because it characterizes them all with zeal for God's glory and the salvation of souls.

The Society shares with us together with a sublime end most

(2) I. Cor. ii. 12.

excellent and efficacious means for the attainment of that end. Easily first among such means is the schooling entirely our own and peculiar to the Society afforded by the Spiritual Exercises in the virtue of prayer. And whoever of Ours will make the proper use of that schooling, will not only put down a most solid foundation for his spiritual life whereupon he may safely rear as sublime a superstructure of evangelical perfection as he chooses, but will also gain skill in the wielding of weapons most helpful for the reform of the sinner, the advancement of the just, the salvation and perfection of all.

The Society shares with us the Institute of Father Ignatius, a work full of heavenly wisdom, so holy, so perfect and so complete in every respect that no one of intelligence can read without admiring it and without recognizing in it the finger of God. The Society puts this gift into our hands, enriched by wise additions and enactments of our Fathers which render the observance of the Institute easier, more prompt, and more certain.

The Society shares with us the holy bond which unites us more closely to the Apostolic See, and how much good such a bond has brought with it and what protection it has ever afforded Ours, he knows full well, who gazing in horror at the fierce storms of error that run riot through the world, feels that he is safe on that immovable rock upon which the Church was built by Christ, secure in the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.

The Society shares with us and bequeaths to us that rich heritage of innumerable Fathers, their treasures of learning, their holy lives, their great deeds for Christ's Church, all of which inspire us with the not unfounded hope that unworthy though we be, we are dear to heaven because of such Fathers.

The Society shares with us the wonderful glory which is hers, that she has always been loved by the good and always hated by the wicked. And I would not readily decide which of the two is more to her credit. From the birth to the death of the Society neither has ever ceased to be her portion; neither perished



when the Society perished ; wonderful to say, neither was absent when after forty years the Society was restored to life, and even at the present day the favor of the good and the hatred of the wicked still through the mercy of God abide with the Society.

Lastly, the Society shares with us and offers to us for our consolation that wonderful kindness of Divine Providence in her regard, which by an uninterrupted series of prodigies has preserved her from complete destruction and has given her back to life and in many a strange way keeps, cherishes and advances a Society which bears the name of Jesus, which copies the life of Jesus, which shares the cross of Jesus, which is united and pledged in a special manner to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Such, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, are our possessions ; not all of them, however, for who can count them all ? Rather then is this a brief enumeration of some of the possessions of which the Society invites us to have a portion and which she generously shares with each of us, and by which she forces us in our turn to share our possessions equally with her without delay, without reluctance, without stint, and to testify in this way our love for the best of mothers.

But have we not already in forsaking the vanities of the world, in giving ourselves to the Society and in binding ourselves by vows before God to spend our life forever therein, have we not, I say, in this given ourselves wholly and all that we are to the Society without having anything further at our disposal to give her ? True enough, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, what we have given to God, and for God have devoted to the Society is called and is really a holocaust. Yet, since we are living victims which, however perfect in their first oblation, can and ought to be offered day after day by an ever renewed sacrifice, and since human nature is most tenacious of even its relinquished rights and always keeps, while in this life, the free use of its faculties and powers, even though it should have given up the dominion of them more than once, we have assuredly even in our present condition

many things at our command by the disposal of which in the service of the Society we may prove our love for her not in words but in works. This consideration opens up for us a wide field for reflection and while exhorting you time and time again to think well on it, I will touch on a few points which it discloses.

First of all, then, a love of the Society demands of us careful application and zeal to acquire a correct knowledge of her teaching and a right understanding of her spirit, methods, and aims. Now in this matter I fear that many do not do all that the proper performance of the duties entrusted to them justly requires. Some perhaps there are, who rest content with the customary reading of the Rules at table without bothering themselves much, about getting at their force and meaning, and scarcely ever give a thought to the Rules proper to their position, which are so many efficient helps to the correct and perfect fulfilment of their duties according to the spirit of the Society. Yet these Rules should be for each one a mirror in which he might contemplate himself and the duties of his position and take note of his deficiencies, and of the way in which he can mould himself and his actions on the ideal of the Institute which he loves and admires. Indeed, already and quite frequently it has been truly remarked and has been insisted on in the General Congregations of the Society and in the letters of the Generals that, if we perform some of our duties ill, there is no need of new laws, no need of devising new methods, but that everything has already been quite amply provided for ; and to draw up new devices or lay down new laws would be a sheer waste of time for anyone and would be a clear proof that he was ignorant of the treasures under his very eyes. Now, if what our predecessors have wisely drawn up and decreed, are unknown, such a condition of things must needs be as is described in Ecclesiasticus : " Wisdom that is hid, and a treasure that is not seen, what profit is there in them both ?" <sup>(3)</sup> Here, however, I must not fail to note in passing, a fact which comes at times to our knowledge that some there are who read the Institute and

<sup>(3)</sup> Eccli. xli. 17.

carefully ponder over the Constitutions, Decrees and Ordinations but for the sake of others and not for their own sake. Thus, the whole fruit reaped from such reading seems to be directed to picking out with a sharp eye and severely criticising the failings of others, without, however, any zeal on their own part for the accomplishment of duties common to all or proper to their own position. Now if such persons were inspired with a sincere love of the Society, they would certainly have a care to know and accomplish whatever is laid down that they, they themselves, I say, should do in their own offices.

Moreover, the love of the Society which urges us on strongly to give to the understanding of the Institute no superficial study, will not let us rest content with the mere understanding. For what good, I pray, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, is going to come to the Society because many of Ours know its teaching and laws, admire their wisdom and praise their goodness? Of what service to the Society will it all be, if such persons do not put into practice and daily use what they know, praise, and admire? I may apply to this point what St. Hilary has said on another, but somewhat similar, topic. In speaking against those who call out to Christ, "Lord, Lord," and do not do His will, he goes on to say, "What merit is there in crying out to the Lord, 'Lord?' Will He not be the Lord unless He be called such by you?" So in like manner we may say what merit is there in thinking and speaking highly of the Institute and in having this cry frequently on the lips, "Holy Institute, holy Institute!" Will it not be holy unless called such by us? Surely the good of the Society does not depend on the fact that her laws are written, but on their exact observance, and if such observance be wanting, the Institute will indeed be holy, as it truly is, but the Society as it works here on earth and is made up of us now living will be far indeed from holiness.

I think that in mentioning these two points, the understanding and working out of our Institute, I have mentioned all that a love of the Society asks of us, for clearly in these points everything is



contained. Yet lest what has been said, be too general and therefore less practical, it will be of help to speak of one or two virtues in particular, by which we must show forth in deeds whether we possess a genuine love of the Society.

First among these is that virtue which our holy Founder asks of us all as the foundation stone of our life in the Society, that virtue in which he wishes "our chief and most earnest endeavor to be," whose extreme necessity both for our own perfection and for the other aim of our Society, the help of the neighbor, is insisted on in very many places of our Constitutions, I mean the denial of ourselves, of our will and judgment and, in the words of St. Ignatius, "of all sensual love." In the practice of the self-denial of which I speak, it is perfectly clear that we shall have so much the more occasion to prove our love for the Society, as this virtue is harder on human nature. I would that we finally came to see the great and absolute necessity of self-denial which is such that, just as without it Christ our Lord was wont to say: "he cannot, he cannot be my disciple," in like manner we should feel that we cannot, that we surely cannot without it be true children of the Society. And just as our holy Founder declares that those who seriously follow Christ, our Lord, are diligent in the practice of this virtue, so we should be convinced that without it none of us can seriously cling to the Society and none of us can seriously love it. In very truth, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, if one of us at any time fail in his duty, if harmony be disturbed at home or a want of good example be noted abroad, when the interest of our neighbor is perhaps not well attended to, if there be a falling off on our part in the practice of poverty, obedience and other virtues proper to our calling, if anyone be too eager in the pursuit of his own comfort or reluctantly undertake or carelessly accomplishes a work rather irksome or little to his liking, if anyone chafes under domestic discipline, or in treating with the neighbor shows himself impatient, hard to please, ungracious or vain and selfish, and though otherwise an excellent worker, yet is to be counted of the number of those who pull

down with one hand what they build up with the other, if any of these things happen, the source of such evils and misfortunes is not to be sought for elsewhere than in a want of zeal for the virtue of self-denial, and because that regard is not had for the Society which a loving mother rightly expects from loving sons. Let us then have this point above all well understood and determined that as sincere lovers of the Society we should be prepared generously to sacrifice ourselves, our will, I say, and judgment, our desires, all our time, everything, in a word, that nature has made precious and dear to us. Whenever the occasion of making such a sacrifice presents itself to us, and in every position there will be many such occasions, then let us understand that the time has come in which to show forth the true and heartfelt love of the Society which is in us, in order that our professions of affection be not meaningless, in order that "we may not love in words nor in tongue but in deed and in truth."

The second way in which we should testify our love for the Society, is to place loyally at her disposal, as duty demands, all the gifts that God in His goodness has showered on us, and not be satisfied with having done our duty in any fashion, if with greater diligence and care we could have done it better, more profitably and more fully. Here, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, if anywhere, we have that sharing in one another's goods in which, as we have quoted above from our holy Father, love chiefly consists. Whether one has received five talents or two, let him as a clever and wide-awake merchant put out the five talents at interest for the enriching of the Society and, if any there be who think that they have received but one talent, let them not keep it hidden in the earth. For as the servant in the Gospel who had received two talents and gained other two, earned the same praise as he who with five talents had gained other five, so he who received but one, if by industry he had doubled it would, without a doubt, have been himself called by the Lord a "good and faithful servant" and would have won even more praise than he to whom five talents had been entrusted, if this latter had by less care re-

turned a gain of but two or three talents ; for our love is not to be measured by the generosity of the Lord but by our activity, our labor, our faithfulness in work. We are not ignorant, it is true, that in this house of our Father there are many mansions, but let us remember that there is no mansion for ease and idleness and that no one should be found, while enjoying health of body, who cannot or ought not do good work for the Society in some line. As there are in the Society through God's goodness many men of such good will as to take up cheerfully any service which necessity or the wish of Superiors demands of them even though they could justly claim that their regular duties gave them enough to do, so also we sometimes see others, and it is with sadness I recall the fact, who while satisfying an obligation which calls for but a slight part of their energies and powers, hold off and excuse themselves from any other burden which they could at the same time quite easily carry. Which one of these two must be held to have a real love of the Society and truly and with affection to share his possessions with the Society, everyone knows well without any words from me.

Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, would that all fulfilled these obligations with the same readiness as all understand them ! How much fairer the Society would be to look upon ! How much more closely she would approach to her old time splendor, that true splendor which was won for her by the scrupulous care of all her children in every duty, by their zeal, by their activity, by their devotion of mind and body to the works enjoined on them by the Institute for the greater glory of God and the help of their neighbor ! In this way it was that our Fathers gained for her the solid glory which they handed down to us as a heritage, and in no other way ought we to keep and defend it, lest becoming much unlike our predecessors, whether through ignorance of the Institute or slothfulness in living up to it, we may bring on the Institute instead of an increase in goodness and glory, evil and disgrace before God and man, and lest our Mother the Society whom we children cherish with a tender love, receive harm from



us which long years could scarcely heal. In conclusion let each one, I pray, persuade himself whatever be his grade, whatever position he have in the Society, whether superior or inferior workman in the vineyard of the Lord, whether at the head of studies or spiritual matters or a scholastic occupied in learning or teaching, or even if he be engaged in the duties of the house, let each one, I say, deem that whatever his position or duty, he has a share in promoting the common good, so that the fair name of the Society, its advancement, and its prosperity depend upon his zeal and labor. May the God of our Lord, "and Great Captain" Jesus Christ, may the Father of glory give to all the spirit of wisdom and the eyes of the heart enlightened that we may know what is the hope of our calling and that we may not fall off from the high ideals of the Fathers and Brothers who have gone before us. But after their example, may our charity more and more abound in knowledge and in all understanding and may we be replenished with the fruit of justice through Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. Amen.

I earnestly ask, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, to be remembered in the holy Masses and prayers of you all.

Your Servant in Christ,

JOHN ROTHMAN.

*Rome,*

*July 7, 1830.*

**XV.**

A LETTER OF OUR VERY REVEREND FR. ROTHAAAN TO THE FATHERS AND BRETHREN OF THE SOCIETY, UPON THE PROSPERITY OF THE SOCIETY AND THE DANGERS THAT ATTEND IT.

Owing to a lack of leisure, Reverend Fathers and dearly Beloved Brothers, I have been compelled to defer too long perhaps, the purpose I had formed of addressing myself to the whole Society. Now, however, that the Triennial Congregation is over, and the Fathers Procurators have returned to their respective Provinces, although I am still burdened with much business, I can delay no longer to make known to you the joy I feel at the rapid progress of our Society. However, as this progress brings with it certain dangers, I feel it to be my duty to point them out to you, that being one in purpose and in effort, we may, with God's good help, more easily avoid them.

It is with no little satisfaction that I behold the Society, of late years, daily increasing far beyond our highest anticipations. Our numbers are grown greater; our houses and undertakings are prosperous, and are being multiplied in every part of the world. Nevertheless, the responsibility of my office fills me with some concern lest this progress be not an advance in accordance with the spirit of our Constitutions. If not, it is an evil that will lead us to destruction, and sooner or later mourning will take hold of the end of joy.

Now this concern of mine, I earnestly entreat all to share; not only the Provincials, Rectors of Colleges, and Heads of Houses, who, in a special manner, are called upon to bear with me the burden of care, but all, each one according to his station. For we are all members of one body, and if we be living members, we ought to have at heart the health and increase of the whole body, which in a measure depend upon the health of every single member.

We have indeed, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, great reason to praise the goodness of God, and to be filled with a

sweet sense of gratitude towards Him, when we reflect upon the wonderful progress made by the Society in these iniquitous times. Public confusion seems everywhere to prevail. In many places, the friends who were formerly so energetic in our behalf, are now helpless and despondent. Our enemies are every day waxing stronger in numbers, in influence, and in violence. Amid such a state of affairs, is it not a miracle that the Society is able to stand at all, much less to make progress? Certainly, in the presence of such obstacles, we never expected to witness a rapid increase in the number of recruits, and in the works undertaken for the glory of God. And although, on the one hand, this increase is deservedly a reason for very great joy, on the other, it should make us more determined in nowise to fail of our duties to God. For my part, I confess that I have some serious misgivings over this undue prosperity,—love indeed is full of misgivings,—when I consider that it may be attended with dangers of no slight moment.

The first danger to be feared is that in order to maintain the numerous undertakings upon which we are at present engaged, and to begin the new ones that are in some places all but thrust upon us, we may be willing to receive into the Society all who ask admission, and thus open the door to many against whom it should be closed. Now if we receive into our ranks persons who are unfit and unworthy, and allow them at the end of two years to pronounce the simple vows, the Society will, in a very brief space of time, become what our Holy Founder styled a mob, an assembly by no means conformable to the Institute, which instead of promoting the labors of the Society, will bring about trouble and confusion. No assemblage of men, even of good men, is free from defects, because whatever good qualities they may have, they are nevertheless men, and the children of men. Each one has within him a human element; hence the greater the number of persons assembled, the more manifest will be the defects inherent in frail human nature. What, then, would become of our Society if, in the admission of new subjects, we were to esteem unduly numbers, and pay no heed to the Rules for admission that are expressly laid



down in the Constitutions? We could with justice be charged with endeavoring to impede and not advance the interests of the Society. For it often happens, that when a single individual goes astray, he prevents, or at least retards the progress of many who were advancing rapidly in the right direction. And this brings me to another danger springing from the same source. Many who are fit, and who feel a real vocation to the Society, will hold back, when they see with what ease unworthy and unfit persons gain admission. For with good reason, they would doubt, if the Society of our day be truly the Society that was founded by Ignatius; since he prescribed great care in the selection of subjects, and wished that none but generous and heroic souls should be received in his Company.

Now there is no one who will not at some time or other be made the confidant of some fervent soul's desire of entering the Society. Therefore, I charge not only Provincials, Rectors, and Masters of Novices, but Consultors, Examiners of Postulants, and all of Ours, not to yield upon such occasions to transports of joy, as if they had fallen upon some great treasure, but first of all, to consider carefully, if the postulant be able and willing to further the glory of God in the Society, and if he be ready and eager to enter upon a course of high perfection. And in this matter, let no one allow himself to be deceived by a false charity which looks only to the interest of him who seeks admission. The Society has the first claim upon our charity; for its interests concern not one, but many individuals. Moreover, experience has proved that nothing is gained by admitting persons who have not the required dispositions, for sooner or later, to their own and the Society's detriment, they will leave us of their own accord, or be compelled to do so unwillingly.

There is another danger closely allied to the former which, by a sad necessity, arises from the multiplicity of our occupations. In order that these occupations be maintained, and new ones undertaken, many are employed in them before their time, and before they have been sufficiently formed in the Spirit of the Society.

Wherever this is done, such persons exercise the most serious business of the ministry at the risk of their vocation, and possibly of their salvation. They bring discredit upon the Society, and inflict damage beyond repair upon the glory of God and the salvation of souls. For while many things are undertaken, often very little is done, for the reason that, there is wanting strength of body and disposition of mind sufficient for the undertakings.

Would that these dangers, dear Fathers and Brothers, that I have just pointed out, were only impending, and not yet actually upon us. But to our great grief, they have in some instances already come to pass. It is indeed consoling to witness the great good that Ours are doing in many parts of the world : nevertheless, in some places, there are superiors and inferiors, who, being lovers of their own ease, do their work in a shiftless way, and have not those solid virtues that God, aye, and even the world, looks for in the members of the Society of Jesus. Such persons are they who neither read nor observe the Common Rules and those of their office ; who are by no means laborers that need not be ashamed ; who little heed that they are of those whom the Apostle blames, men who seek the things that are their own, not the things that are Christ's. They do very willingly works that are pleasing and agreeable to them, but from those that are distasteful, they ask exemptions. And since they dare not, or else are ashamed to say plainly " I will not," feigning sorrow they say complainingly " I am not able." To these last, if there be any such, I would offer as food for serious meditation these significant words of the Holy Ghost, " If thou say I have not strength enough, He that seeth into the heart, He understandeth ; and nothing deceiveth the keeper of the soul ; and He shall render to a man according to his works." <sup>(1)</sup> O my dear Fathers and Brothers, how much ashamed, confounded, and humbled we should feel while reflecting upon these things ! And at the same time we should ponder well what our great Leader, Jesus Christ, what our holy Father, St. Ignatius, and what the example of our Fathers demand and rightfully ex-

(1) Prov. xxiv. 12.

pect of members of the Society. For we are the children of the Saints. Let no one, then, upon any occasion yield to self-complacency ; but let him rather meditate and frequently examine if his actions be pleasing to God and to Jesus Christ ; if they be pleasing to St. Ignatius, his Father, and to that host of saints, who, formerly faithful children of Ignatius upon earth, are now his inseparable companions in heaven ; and let him, finally, with the aid of divine grace, enkindle in his heart an abiding desire for better things.

Since I have touched upon the want of alacrity in obedience, I must not omit to mention another very serious danger against which we should be upon our guard. Obedience, as all are aware, is the characteristic virtue of the Society. It welds the whole body together. It gives direction and consistency to the manner of living and method of action not only of subjects but of Superiors also, and even of the General, so that whatever jeopardizes this virtue must be regarded as a very serious danger. Now such a danger, arising from the spirit of an age, all disordered and out of joint as ours is, menaces the Society at the present time, unless we be on our guard.

Nor need we cast about to find the predominating spirit of our age. The last General Congregation in its 27th Decree, would have Superiors repeatedly admonished to safeguard the hearts of their subjects against the spirit of the world, which is the spirit of pride, brooking no subjection, and, in these our days, rushing in upon us from every quarter with the suddenness and violence of a wind storm. And over against this danger the Fathers of the Congregation would have us oppose the spirit of our Institute, the gentle breath of whose life is humility and obedience.

Indeed, so wide an influence has the spirit of liberty, it were better called license and boastful self-reliance, upon the minds of high and low, that even the very children appear infected with its pestilential breath. But why blame the children ? lack of home influence and faulty training of hearth and home are the causes of this misfortune. For, nowadays, foolish hearted parents consider



the ruder and saucier child as more clever, and lovable and worthy of praise. Hence it is that we see boys and witless youths ever ready to discuss, criticize, and even condemn the sayings and doings of their elders ; and when more advanced in years, though without the warrant of talent or education, they yet believe themselves well versed in all public matters both sacred and profane and fully competent to give their opinion upon them ; they freely criticize even the highest officials of the land, nay more, priests and even bishops of God's holy Church do not escape the scathing bitterness of their tongues. And such conduct they not only do not regard at all as a vicious license on their part but claim rather that it is only the just exercise of their natural rights.

We are, as it were, living in an atmosphere of license and unrestraint. This spirit of independence is in the very air we breathe. Therefore, how fearful we should be lest our minds become infected with the poison. Should this happen, how will our religious obedience stand, and remain intact ? All who seek to be admitted into the Society must of necessity come from this sinful world. How very difficult, then, it will be for them, when they have gained what they sought, to rid themselves of the habit contracted in childhood of pronouncing judgment upon their Superiors, unless by generous and heroic self-denial they crush the old habit and form a new one based not upon the spirit of the world but upon the spirit of the Gospel !

Every one must now see that the danger threatening the Society from this source is a very grave one. Already complaints have been made that this spirit of liberty and independence is creeping in among our younger members. It is said that they do not scruple to make the actions of Superiors, the topic of their conversation, nay, they criticise and condemn them. Moreover, it is said that some are never content unless in their literary studies, in their choice of books, and in their pursuit of the sciences, they are allowed to follow their own pleasure and fancy, wholly disregarding the *Ratio Studiorum*, and the instructions of their teachers. Then going a step further, being over wise in their own estimation they take upon themselves to discuss and censure not only the ordinances that concern themselves, but criticize most roundly the management of the college in which they live, and even venture to give their views on the government of the Province, and of the whole Society. What, I ask you, dear Fathers and Brothers, will

become of the obedience of the Society if so destructive a spirit prevail among us? What will become of the Society, if our young Scholastics imbued with that spirit, be raised to the Priesthood and Profession, and then are sent to labor in the class-room, the lecture-hall, or to assist in the government of the Society? Such men assuredly will not fulfil the duties imposed upon them in the manner prescribed by the Constitutions and Rules. They will not act according to the peculiar method of our Institute, but according to personal methods. They will teach as they please, preach, and give missions in which will not appear the slightest trace of the Society's method. And if at any time they be called to fill some office, they will so govern as to narrow the broad and generous lines of government laid down in the Institute to meet their own private and short-sighted views. In matters spiritual, literary, and temporal, they will build up and pull down whatever they please. They will act as absolute masters, and not as religious Superiors, who are bound by the Institute, and who are themselves under authority, who by the example of their own obedience may justly demand it of others, and to whom have been given Consultors to aid them by wise counsel. Rather men of this kind are their own Consultors—their personal views their Institute, and their own capricious wills their guide and their all.

For this reason, I ask and admonish and entreat all, by the sweet mercy of Jesus Christ, to watch over themselves with great diligence, and to have regard for the interests of the Society. Let all be on their guard, lest the spirit of the world creep into their hearts, and there making its abode, grow strong, and in the end destroy them. Should this occur, which God forbid, it would ruin not only individuals but the whole Society.

Now, since the Society in some measure resembles a military body, it may not be unprofitable to recall here the essential characteristic of such organizations. We all know the great honor paid nowadays to so-called liberty and independence. In some states it is the corner-stone and pillar of the government. Yet that same independence, even in states that boast most loudly of the freedom

of their subjects, is always denied those who are employed in military service, so that in peace no less than in war, all members of their armies, whether they are volunteers, or have been drafted into the service, the commanders as well as the privates, the highest and the lowest, are governed and bound by absolute obedience. Moreover, a refusal to obey, nay, even the least sign of opposition to the command, is always considered a capital offence.

With this consideration before our minds what are we to think of obedience, we, I say, who are soldiers not of an ordinary type or under ordinary human conditions but who through the infinite goodness of God are soldiers of Christ and are doing battle for God under the banner of Christ by a divine vocation and by the deliberate choice of our own free will?

Let therefore this our banner keep ever before us the nature and spirit of our obedience, for we follow as our Leader Christ who became for us "obedient unto death even to the death of the cross."<sup>(2)</sup> Let this banner of Christ, I say, convince us of the absolute necessity of obedience; and how shameful, how dishonorable in us, nay, how traitorous to the cause of Christ to fail in this obedience to our Leader!

I come now to speak of dangers of an entirely different nature, dangers that threaten the Society from without. Such are persecution and loss of property which in some Provinces while I write, menace our very existence. Nevertheless, I freely confess, dear Fathers and Brothers, that in spite of my anxiety, I find very great consolation in contemplating ourselves persecuted by the hatred and furious opposition of wicked men. You are astonished at my words. Pardon me if, by giving utterance to the thoughts that are uppermost in my mind, I have unconsciously given offence. Never can the position which I hold in the Society excite in me feelings of self-complacency. For in all our works, numerous as they are, and in every quarter of the globe, we must look upon ourselves as useless servants, who when everything has been done well, have barely performed our duty. Now since in virtue of my office, I am obliged to be acquainted with and consider well every one of those undertakings, my grief is the more poignant when I

<sup>(2)</sup> Philipp. ii. 8.



behold them performed carelessly, or when I realize how far we are from the high ideal of perfection proposed to us by our holy Founder as a means for obtaining the glory of God and the salvation of souls. And because my desires for that perfection will never be fulfilled, I grieve and lament, and know that thus it shall be to the end of my days. "Lord all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee." <sup>(3)</sup> For Sion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for the sake of Jerusalem I will not rest." <sup>(4)</sup> This is, and shall ever be my constant prayer to the Lord.

Yet when I behold the Society, notwithstanding its shortcomings, assailed by the enemies of Christ, of God, and of the Church, I cannot but feel consolation in the midst of my grief. Their attacks are directed against us first. Their first aim is to harass, disperse, and even destroy our Society, as far as lies in their power. But this thought brings solace to my sorrowing soul that all these persecutions prove the Society of to-day, weak and unperfect though it be, the legitimate child begotten of Ignatius. By their fear of us, our adversaries bear witness that we possess, if not the strength, at least the spirit of forefathers, who were heroes. It surpasses my understanding, my good Lord, how the mere arrival and presence of a few poor religious arouse so great a terror, such wild and fearful commotion! Why this tireless zeal on the part of wicked men? Why their ceaseless labor, and combined exertions? Old calumnies are tricked out in new colors, and twice-told tales are repeated day after day in newspapers and magazines unto nauseous repetition. This is consolation for me, dear Fathers and Brothers, for it is our peculiar glory in the sight of God. It is the surest sign that God is with us, and a proof that by His mercy we are still free from the spirit of the world. For, the Lord says: "If you had been of the world; the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." <sup>(5)</sup> And lest we be afraid of the world and its menaces, He adds, "But have confidence I have conquered the world." <sup>(6)</sup> These words, so full of strengthening assurance, He uttered on the eve

<sup>(3)</sup> Ps. xxxvii. 10.    <sup>(4)</sup> Isaias lxii. 1.    <sup>(5)</sup> St. John xv. 19.    <sup>(6)</sup> St. John xvi. 32.

of His sacred Passion and Death. What reason have we, then, for fear who serve under the banner of Him Who held crucifixion and death to be victory !

Yet because in the presence of these dangers we have special duties to perform, I shall now conclude by briefly pointing out the manner in which we should perform them.

A heavy storm has already burst over several of our Provinces. In truth, the wind is contrary for us. Yet let us recall how of old the disciples acted, when their frail boat was tossed about upon the waters of the lake by the violence of the gale. Their conduct is the model which Ours should follow in this present crisis.

First of all, like careful sailors, they furled their sails, otherwise the violence of the winds would have capsized their boat, or driven her on a rock, or dashed her upon the shore there to be beaten to pieces. This prudence, I think Ours would do well to imitate. For as we are now riding against the gale of persecution, we should take great care to leave nothing exposed which can in any way furnish our adversaries with matter for calumny, or with a specious pretext for increasing their opposition. One can hardly believe how watchful our enemies are, even of our most ordinary actions. Nay, they go so far as to plan means of finding out every chance word uttered in our daily intercourse, and are ready to hit upon the least semblance of evil as an excuse for their violent attacks. Moreover, if we consult our history, we shall find that seldom has any reverse fallen upon the Society, but that some imprudence, no doubt unintentional, on the part of one of Ours, furnished to evil-minded men the pretext for the injury. More than once has it happened that a single word or act on the part of some well-meaning, but indiscreet person has wrought irreparable damage to the Society, to God's glory, and to the souls under our care. I do not indeed mean to assert that if one has acted indiscreetly, his upright intention makes him guilty in the sight of God ; but an upright intention can not prevent nor neutralize the sad consequences of the indiscretion. Therefore, let us provide "good things not

only in the sight of God but also in the sight of all men ;’’<sup>(7)</sup> “ because the days are evil ;’’<sup>(8)</sup> let us abstain in word and deed from every appearance of evil, so “ that he who is on the contrary part may be afraid, having no evil to say against us ;’’<sup>(9)</sup> none at least that is true, or that has the least semblance of truth, so that when they speak all evil against us they shall be lying as Christ Himself declared when he founded the enjoyment of bliss in the enduring of persecution and pain.

Still our zeal should be tempered with discretion. “ The charity of Christ presseth us’’<sup>(10)</sup> says the Apostle. By these words he is far from advising imprudent zeal. Rather if we consult the precise meaning of the Greek text we shall learn that we are to place a bridle upon our zeal, and now loosen, now tighten the reins according to circumstances. Hold as certain, that no one is to give himself up to works of zeal indiscriminately ; his zeal must be according to knowledge. Therefore, in this matter, all should submit to be directed and governed by the counsel of Superiors ; who in the Latin tongue are aptly termed moderatores, because they determine the modum or measure of the zeal of their subjects, now urging them forward, now restraining them, according as they fall short of, or transgress the proper limit.

The next act of the disciples in the storm was to labor, all as one man to avert the impending peril. There had been on former occasions, for they were human, some strife and contention among them as to which held the first place, but in that storm-tossed bark, when their lives were endangered by the winds and waves, there was no thought of strife. So too, dear Fathers and Brothers, the opposition of our enemies should only serve to unite us, more firmly. Blessed, truly, is that tempest that arouses us to more perfect charity. If we are always to think and say the same thing, as our holy Father, St. Ignatius, adapting the thought of the Apostle, commands us to do, more than ever is it necessary at the present time ; and the more violently we are attacked, the more necessary it is that we should stand together. This union, more than any-

(7) Rom. xii. 17. (8) Ephes. v. 16. (9) Titus ii. 8. (10) II. Cor. v. 14.



thing else, will make us able to withstand the assaults of our enemies ; it will give us courage in the midst of calamity ; and it will be the means by which we shall finally triumph. Nothing, on the other hand, will bring us more dangers, nothing will give greater joy to our adversaries, than internal dissension among us. " Their heart is divided ; now they shall perish " <sup>(11)</sup> will be the exulting cry of our enemies. The Wise Man, however, says that, " a brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city. " <sup>(12)</sup> Now if the strength arising from the union of two individuals, is likened to that of a well-walled city, what may we not expect from the union that exists for love of Christ among those of a whole house, a whole Province, and the whole Society.

When the disciples, now nearly overwhelmed by the winds and the raging sea, perceived that not only were they making no headway, but that every effort was needed to sustain the violence of the gale, they labored at the oars, a wearisome and lowly task. We too, dear Fathers and Brothers, when harassed by our enemies and prevented from fulfilling the more brilliant functions of the Society, should humbly apply ourselves nevertheless to our work of saving souls. We should eagerly strive to be of service to all men, especially to the poor and distressed, gladly taking upon ourselves lowly and disagreeable offices, and performing them with scrupulous care. When Pius the Seventh, whose memory ever lives with us, restored the Society to the nations of the earth, he expressed the hope that its members would be strong rowers in the bark of Peter. Our duty it is, to see that this hope be not unfulfilled. We can give no more emphatic, no more eloquent response to the calumnious accusations of our enemies, than our good deeds : deeds that will force praise from the lips even of our accusers.

Finally, the disciples driven almost to despair, arouse their Lord and Master Who has been sleeping the while in the stern ; or as happened on another occasion, they called to Him, by fervent prayers, to come from His retreat upon the mountain to the rescue. They would not have left Him, had He not commanded them, so

(11) Osee x. 2.

(12) Prov. xviii. 19.

that they seek and obtain safety through Him. Now if we, dear Fathers and Brothers, act prudently, if we be united by charity, if we work earnestly and humbly according to our strength and opportunity, with like confidence we may call upon God for aid ; Who is all-powerful, “ Who hath delivered and doth deliver us out of so great dangers ; in whom we trust that He will yet also deliver us.” <sup>(13)</sup> And though at times He may seem to be sleeping, in reality “ He shall neither slumber nor sleep that keepeth Israel.” <sup>(14)</sup> At other times, He may seem to be hidden, or afar off, because He does not overcome the violence and fury of our enemies. Yet when implored with humble and fervent prayer, He will answer at the proper time, “ Here I am ! Have a good heart, fear year not.” The Lord is our light and our salvation ; whom shall we fear. The Lord is the protector of our lives ; of whom shall we be afraid ?

Therefore, dear Fathers and Brothers, let us labor diligently. If we be on our guard against the dangers that originate in ourselves, we need fear nothing from those that threaten us from without ; for if sin be not in us, no adversity can injure us. Let us be true, faithful sons of our Father St. Ignatius, and of the Society of Jesus. At least, let us strive to become such by frequent victories over self. Let us with all our hearts give ourselves wholly to God, and to Jesus Christ ; not offering Him mere words and sterile sentiment, but generously immolating to Him every day, our minds, our wills, our lives, and doing for Him deeds worthy of our high vocation. We should try our hearts, proving ourselves, as the Apostle says. “ Who, then, shall separate us from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation ? or distress, or famine ? or nakedness ? or danger ? or persecution ? In all these things we overcome because of him that hath loved us.” <sup>(15)</sup> O if we would but utter this from the depths of our souls, meaning it ; if we would only become true members of Jesus Christ, we could with confidence cry out as did the disciples on the lake “ Master doth it not concern thee, that we perish ?” <sup>(16)</sup> And each one, in his own heart, could exclaim, “ Because O Lord, I am Thy servant and the son of Thy

<sup>(13)</sup> II. Cor. i. 10.<sup>(14)</sup> Ps. cxx. 4.<sup>(15)</sup> Rom. viii.<sup>(16)</sup> St. Mark iv. 38.

handmaid.”<sup>(17)</sup> “I am Thine, save Thou me.”<sup>(18)</sup> And the loving Jesus will save us. Rising up, He will command the winds and the sea, and there shall be a great calm. And finally, after we have been storm-tossed in His service, He will lead us into the harbor of eternal happiness. Amen.

I most earnestly beg to be remembered in the Holy Sacrifices and prayers of all.

The servant of all in Christ,

JOHN ROTHAAAN.

*Rome,*

*January 29, 1845.*

<sup>(17)</sup> Ps. cxv. 16.

<sup>(18)</sup> Ps. cxviii. 94.



**XVI.****A LETTER OF VERY REVEREND FATHER ROTHAAAN ON THE  
CALAMITIES OF OUR TIMES AND ON ZEAL FOR THE ACQUIRE-  
MENT OF PERFECTION.**

In accordance with the duty of my office, my dearest Fathers and Brothers, both in the opening years of my government and at other times since then, on the occasion either of actual calamities or the apprehension of more baneful ones, I deemed myself called upon to offer you, by means of letter, counsel and consolation. But I think the present time is more fitting than any before to address you. For I am confronted with the sad fact that God is permitting us to be assailed with greater fury than ever, and there is no place in the world wherein we are not the target for the poisoned shafts of our enemies.

For the "Spirit of lies," disseminated by the pen of countless writers, has possessed the souls of almost every nation. And he seems to lord it over the world and stirs up men's passions to such a pitch of madness against us, that there is no iniquity so revolting, no baseness so dastardly, no, nor folly too silly, nor extravagance too wild, which will not be received by high and low, rich and poor, not merely as bearing a semblance of plausibility, but as stamped with the surety of undisputed truthfulness. Not only books and pamphlets, in greater profusion than ever before, and teeming with falsehoods the most scandalous, are published in every tongue and their contents everywhere greedily devoured, but the daily press—so unbridled is the licence of tongue and pen in these days of ours—circulates slanderous insults without number and poisons the springs of public opinion against us. Day after day public assemblies, private gatherings, shops of all kinds • are flooded with them. To such an extent have the minds of the people been embittered in our regard, that there are grave reasons for fearing lest the blind and deluded populace should some day

burst out into paroxysm of mad fury against us, as the enemies and the curse of mankind, nay, as against men who deserve the abhorrence and maledictions of the public as though we were not human, but the monstrous exhalations from the depths of hell. Verily, the angry sea tosses hither and thither the bark of the Society; the billows rise in ungovernable fury, lashed on all sides. She is scarcely able to weather the fierce outburst of the tempest. A dark evening storm hourly threatens her destruction. I speak in this alarming strain, dearest Fathers and Brothers, because there exists no reason why I should minimize dangers gathering over us. Already, and even where we least of all expected, have we suffered reverses of no slight import. And, unless the hand of God ward them off, we apprehend still more distressful calamities. Hence many a time not knowing what course to adopt and finding no help in the counsels of men, "we have this sole refuge left to us of casting our eyes upon God" and imploring heaven's protection with all the more confidence, the less human support we have to rely upon.

Nevertheless, Fathers and dearest Brothers, amid afflictions, so many, and so dreadful, there are not wanting to us sources of soothing consolation, of which it were not meet that you be left in ignorance.

The unceasing favor shown us by many saintly Pastors of the Church, by many pious laymen, and the courage with which they have championed our cause bring the deepest consolation to us in our affliction, especially the attachment of the Most Holy Prince of Pastors, Pius IX., lately given by the Holy Spirit to the Church, as Vicar of Christ, furnishes very great comfort to us. And although the Society has long ago received signal tokens of his devotedness: now that he has been exalted to the Pontifical throne we cherish the earnest hope and the unwavering confidence that he will take the Society under his guardianship and, by the supreme authority with which he is invested on earth, be even a stronger bulwark to her against the assaults of her foes.

Another source of relief from the anguish with which the hatred

of so many fills us, is the ever-growing demand and the ardent desire which so many express, for the spiritual ministrations of the Society. Indeed so many are the appeals made, that a sufficient supply of laborers is lacking to gather the harvests whitening in the proffered fields of many lands. There is a source of even greater consolation. And it springs from the copious blessings which the Divine goodness showers down upon our labors. One would imagine that God wishes by the increasing abundance of this spiritual joyousness to assuage the grief occasioned by the enmity of the evil-minded, and to counteract the maledictions of the wicked by the grateful benedictions of the virtuous.

Another solace is the harvest of souls reaped in climes far distant from Europe. The fields of those lands, growing daily whiter for the harvest, appeal for a continually increasing supply of toilers to gather it into the barns of Christ's Church. And while many of those heroes, devoted to the foreign missions, have met with an untimely death from their untiring labor and zeal, volunteers have not been wanting, whose sole ambition is to fill these vacant posts of danger. And this evidences that the spirit of the apostles is always alive and flourishing in the Society, and hence large comfort should be yours and mine, nay, it should make us more hopeful and trustful in the Lord, that, though the Society be tossed about at the mercy of the furious waters, she will nevertheless ride safely and gallantly through the storm, by the mercy of God, and enter the haven of peaceful calm.

But all that I have thus far said may seem to be but human consolation. I come now to an excellence of eminent importance, a grace peculiarly characteristic of the Society, one obtained from God for the Society by many a prayer and tear of our holy Father Ignatius and bequeathed by him to his sons as a most precious heritage. This Ignatian prerogative is apostolic, it is evangelical, yea, it is divine. It grows into our very being during our life in the Society, and it is, not to admire in pious theory only, but to experience and feel in fact that unbounded happiness which comes from suffering persecutions for the name of Christ.



In the first place it is clear to everyone that this hatred, I had almost called it phrensied hatred, with which the world assails the Society, springs from the common hatred it bears Jesus Christ. Hence while these contemptible men hurl their anathemas against us, heaping up falsehood upon falsehood with an unblushing effrontery which passes all belief, they are fulfilling in sad reality the prophecy of Christ wherein He foretold the manner in which His followers would be made blessed. "Blessed are ye, when they shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly for my sake."<sup>(1)</sup> And again "Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you and when they shall separate you and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake."<sup>(2)</sup> Weigh well these thoughts, dearest Fathers and Brothers, and see how literally we experience the truth of Christ's prediction. Meditate on every word, and drink in full measure the promised blessing. Ponder well the words, "When they speak all that is evil against you untruly, for my sake;" and, "When they shall cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." Now these tribulations, by an extraordinary privilege of the Society, we experience daily.

Nor is there any ground for thinking that we lose all just title to this blessedness owing to the fact that some of Ours may have at any time by fault or indiscretion occasioned the attacks of slanderous tongues. For what motive can prompt those iniquitous men whose scandalous lives are on the tongues of all, and who would smirch the fair name of the Society, what motive have they, I repeat in exaggerating beyond all bounds some chanced upon blemish in one of the Society's members? And why for some slight fault of an individual do they overwhelm the whole Society with a storm of indignation and hatred? Why is it that men, who "are glad when they have done evil and rejoice in most wicked things,"<sup>(3)</sup> are fired with so burning and intense a zeal against whatsoever fault they discover in Ours, which would be the object of so much pride, if found in themselves, or men of their own habits, as to

<sup>(1)</sup> Matt. v. 11.<sup>(2)</sup> Luke vi. 22.<sup>(3)</sup> Prov. ii. 14.

become the theme and subject of some literary or artistic effort? The answer is simple. They hate the Society's name and spirit, because it has the name and spirit of Christ. They openly declare with an ingenuousness which is surprisingly absurd, that it is not ourselves but our Institute which they abhor; yet our Institute is a model of holiness and founded upon the perfect imitation of Jesus Christ, while we are but men, weighed down by many frailties, stumbling and falling on the road to virtue, and oftentimes leaving the royal road of our Institute which leads to the mount of perfection. Mortal life, moreover, is but the seed-time of the consummate flower of perfection; its full blown beauty cannot be had now. Hence, it is not surprising if in so large a number as our Society has, a chilling frost has blighted or retarded the growth of so fair a flower. In truth, then, the enemies of our Society are convicted of a gross injustice in censuring our faults. Nor do they wear the mask of zeal in the name of virtue for any other reason but for this, that they hate with an intense hatred Jesus Christ, Whom we strive to imitate with unending love.

Now what consolation, dearest Fathers and Brothers, could be greater, what consolation could be more heavenly, than to be made sharers and partakers with the sainted Apostles and Martyrs; to be made sharers, I say, in that sublime blessedness, which Christ in his sermon on the mount, as St. Augustine remarks, put in the last place as if to show that it is the special grace of the perfect and the pinnacle of perfection. Hence the Apostles everywhere in their epistles extol this privilege of fellowship "with the sainted Apostles and Martyrs" in suffering, with the highest praises. In it they themselves gloried and congratulated the faithful on sharing it.

"For unto you it is given for Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him."<sup>(4)</sup> Thus speaks the Apostle to the Philippians. And St. Peter: "If you be reproached for the name of Christ, you shall be blessed; for that which is of the honor, glory, and power of God, and that which is His Spirit, resteth

<sup>(4)</sup> Philipp. i. 29.

upon you." <sup>(5)</sup> And St. James : " My brethren count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations ; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience ; and patience hath a perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing." <sup>(6)</sup> And again : " Take, my brethren, for an example of suffering evil, of labor and patience, the Prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold we account them blessed who have endured. You have heard of the patience of Job and you have seen the end of the Lord." <sup>(7)</sup> And again St. Paul writes : " We are made a spectacle to the world, and to Angels, and to men. . . We are reviled, and we bless. . . We are persecuted and we suffer it. . . We are made as the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all." <sup>(8)</sup>

Have not we also beheld our name become, by a special grace granted the Society, the refuse of this world, the off-scouring of all ? Now in this is seen the most perfect imitation of Christ. It is a virtue in which, as Venerable Bede says " Our Holy Mother Church has been schooled " by her Head, to scorn contumely and death itself, and thus growing in strength, not by resistance but by endurance, she has animated her sons with a triumphal enthusiasm to grapple with tribulation. In this does the glory of God shine forth most strikingly, that as the Only Begotten Son rendered more glory to His Father on the day of His Passion, than by all the labors and miracles of His life ; so also do His servants in like manner increase God's glory more by meek endurance of suffering, than by active toils. For by suffering thus, they become victims immolated to the divine glory. By this heroism, they show forth in their persons the most lifelike image and likeness of Christ.

Hence, dearest Fathers and Brothers, we must look upon the hatred, which the world shows the Society and the attempts to blot her peerless scutcheon, as our glory, our reward, our crown ; than which nothing can be conceived more glorious, more precious, more ardently to be longed for.

But, while thinking over these matters, dearest Fathers and Brothers, I cannot help confessing with all candor how supremely

<sup>(5)</sup> I. Pet. iv. 14. <sup>(6)</sup> St. James i. 2-4. <sup>(7)</sup> St. James v. 10. 11. <sup>(8)</sup> I. Cor. iv. 9-12.



undeserving I am of so great a favor when I reflect upon my own miseries and nothingness. In bewilderment I marvel at the goodness of God for thus conferring upon me and upon the whole Society, so distinguished an honor. I desire greatly that this sentiment should animate all, since I deem it of the utmost necessity that everyone share in it. For, let me confess it, the fear sometimes haunts me, lest the exalted glory of sharing in the Cross of Christ should puff us up and undermine the foundations of humility, a calamity which should be guarded against most studiously. For, could there be a greater absurdity, than to see a privilege, which ought to elevate us to so exalted a grade in the spiritual life, a grade taught us by our Holy Father in "the third degree of humility," could there be a greater absurdity, I ask, than to see this very privilege become a temptation to vanity, and an allurement to spiritual pride.

Again, if it be allowed us to glory in the Cross of Christ, let us remember, according to the teaching of our holy Founder, that whatsoever sufferings fall to our lot, are trifles and nothing at all compared with the sufferings of Christ. Hence let us bear in mind that we can imitate and resemble Christ only in a limited measure. With feelings of deepest self-abasement let us confess our absolute inability to advance one step on the royal road of the Cross by our own unaided efforts. Finally, the thought of infinite interval between our frail mortality and the ineffable sanctity of Christ, the King of glory, to Whom is due all honor for ever, how greatly, I say, ought not this remembrance crush our proud spirit, and cause us to blush for shame. But if indiscreet friends or ill employed enemies so confound our cause with the cause of the Church, and, either by reason of their folly or with a view to heighten our unpopularity, make it out that we are essential for the existence of the Church, far from us be such a thought. For well do we know, that to God, no man nor congregation of men is indispensable. On His unfailing word alone the Church leans for her preservation. And, in vouchsafing to avail Himself of their instrumentality for the advancement and safeguard of the Church's cause, far from

putting Himself under any obligation to them, He rather bestows upon them a princely honor. For is not He "able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham?" Let then each one of us in his own name and in the name of the Society as I have counselled on other occasions, address to God the supplication of the Prophet, with deep feelings of sincerity. "Preserve me, O Lord, for I put my trust in Thee. I have said to the Lord, thou art my God, for thou hast no need of my goods." <sup>(9)</sup>

Not to repeat the exhortations I have given you at other times, and in order to comprise in a word everything I wish to recommend, I beseech you to join with this feeling of sterling humility, a genuine and an efficacious zeal for the acquirement of perfection.

For if there be any powerful means at our disposal, whereby we may appease God's wrath and gain the good will of men, it surely must be found in loyalty to our vocation, and in untiring strivings for the attainment of the ideal perfection held out to us by our Rules and Constitutions. As this high ideal is the object of my ambition, so also, do I desire that it may be the ambition of all; for on it depends the safety of the individual and of the whole Society.

For every one of us at his entrance into the Society must have heard the voice of Christ saying to him: "If thou wilt be perfect . . . come, follow me." In answer to this invitation each one at his reception into the Society promised by vow to follow Christ, to the end that by imitating our Lord in the paths pointed out by our Rules and Constitutions he might reach perfection. Wherefore, let everyone, putting himself in God's presence, examine his attitude towards the attainment of perfection. Let him consider well whether that longing after perfection, which was or should have been the motive power of his vocation, is still strong and vigorous within him. And if he find it weakened, if he discover—and God save him from so dreadful an evil—if he discover that its life has gone, then, for the love of God, let him, by means of the copious graces at his disposal in the Society, restore it to being, to health

<sup>(9)</sup> Ps. xv. 1, 2.

and strength ; for, the glory of God, our own peace and salvation, the welfare of the Church and the Society demand this from every one of us.

For by what other course of action, think you, can we give to God the glory we owe Him, than by animating our lives with the spirit of our vocation than by fulfilling the will of God made known unto us by our Institute and thus strive to please Him through all things and before all things ? This is the grand object of our life in the Society. If this is not the aim of all our actions, what can be the purpose of our life in the Society ? Can life in the Society be worth living without it ?

On this depend our peace and salvation. For the Psalmist says :<sup>(10)</sup> Our life consists "in His good will ;" assuredly not in doing our own will. Finally by thus shaping your lives, "shall you find rest to your souls," as is the promise of Christ. Thus shall you find "my yoke sweet and my burden light" if you take it upon you, and meek and humble of heart follow my example, that is to say, if with a resolute endeavor you put down the uprisings of pride and sensuality, and uproot every vestige of self-love, which, according to the Apostle, is the fountain head of "the body of sin."

The welfare of the Church, I have said, demands also that we keep alive zeal for perfection. For in the Church men of perfection, such men as Christ declared to be the "salt of the earth and the light of the world," are not only her chief adornments for the beauty of God's house, but constitute also her pillars of support, and bulwarks of defence. Such men in the body of the Church are the bone and sinew, which support the weaker members. Now if at any time these supports of religion are weakened, the multitude have scarce any prop, whereon to lean for support. And it happens not unfrequently that they totter and fall headlong into most lamentable destruction. Does not history evidence the fact that in the northern and eastern countries even the faith was corrupted when the "salt had lost its flavor," that is, when those, whose duty it was by the blamelessness of their lives to be a shin-

(10) Ps. xxix. 6.



ing light for the guidance of the faithful, had lapsed into error and evil ways. So important is it then that there flourish in the Church not only states and conditions of perfection, but also men whose saintly lives are the living expression of these states and conditions.

And what shall I say, dearest Fathers and Brothers, of the interest which the Society has in our perfection? Of a truth it is my very deep conviction, and I do not think any one will take exception, that all the Religious Orders established by God in the Church, and among them the Society in a special manner, will be safeguarded and blessed by Him, if they are loyal to their vocation; if they steadfastly endeavor to attain the end of their foundation; in short, if they honestly and manfully labor in the pursuit of that perfection characteristic of their calling. But if they are heedless and neglectful in this regard, I see no reason why God should any longer maintain them in His Church. Nay, rather He will, by a just judgment, suffer them to perish, and will raise up others to bear the fruit of religious perfection. The judgments of God are unsearchable, dearest Fathers and Brothers, and with profoundest homage should we revere them. We learn from the Sacred Scriptures that in punishment for the fault of a single individual, who neglected to walk in the ways of righteousness, appalling calamities have sometimes befallen an entire nation. This is attested by the sin of Achan and of David. In other places Scripture tells us that, through the influence of one just man, multitudes have been rescued from ruin. Witness the case of Noah and Abraham and Moses, and a countless number of others. If then on the one hand hope cheers us, and on the other dread appalls us, let each one examine his manner of life, to discover whether he be a tower of strength to the Society or rather a source of peril. For surely, if the spirit of obedience should become lax in the Society, and God preserve us from such a calamity, if the firm wall of poverty should be undermined, if vain seekings after human glory be discovered, if heedfulness for spiritual concerns should be flung aside, should obedience of rule slacken and zeal for souls grow cold; why should the Society uselessly encumber the field of God's own

Church. The spirit of Ignatius has indeed sown in the world a fruitful seed, which has expanded into a fruitful tree. How disgraceful to us it would be, if others, who are not of the Society, or have been but once trained in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, should acquire therefrom, a fuller measure of the Society's spirit, and a more burning zeal, than some who have lived in the Society, sons of Father Ignatius, who have been brought up in his household, and not once, but repeatedly, nay continuously disciplined in his spiritual teaching. Alas, the training has not been efficacious !

Surely such ungrateful sons forgetful of their vocation cannot glory in the persecutions which have occasioned this letter. Let them not share in that blessedness, which is the rightful possession of the perfect. Rather have they grave reason for alarm lest when any calamity come upon the Society, which affects them more immediately, they should abandon their vocation and one day become traitors to the flag of Christ.

We must be mindful of the warning given by Judith, the heroine of Israel ; that " as our fathers were tempted," and, " proved by many tribulations," were made the friends of God ; and as " all that have pleased God, passed through many temptations remaining faithful ;" so " they that did not receive the trials with the fear of the Lord, were destroyed . . . and perished." <sup>(11)</sup>

What a pity it would be, dearest Fathers and Brothers, what a shame, if that prerogative, which ought to be our surest pledge of salvation and unfading glory, should by some of Ours be made an occasion of dishonor and ruin ! However, to use the words of the Apostle ; " We trust better things of you, and nearer to salvation ; though we speak thus." <sup>(12)</sup> I cherish the hope and confidence in our Lord, that, as the maledictions and threats of our enemies become louder and more furious, every one of Ours will prove steadfast in the day of trial, will bind himself more closely to our Captain, Christ, will cherish the Society with greater affection, love his vocation more loyally, and labor to fulfil its requirements more

<sup>(11)</sup> Judith viii.

<sup>(12)</sup> Heb. vi. 6.

perfectly. And to my great consolation I witness every day not a few gathering from these persecutions the fruit of fervor, and charity and watchfulness. Only "let us not rely on ourselves, but on God Who raises the dead to life,"<sup>(13)</sup> on God, who recalled the Society from the dead to a new life and "who hath delivered and doth deliver her out of so many dangers; in whom we trust that he will yet also deliver her."<sup>(14)</sup>

Wherefore to bring to a close a letter, which lack of time does not allow me to lengthen, it only remains for me most earnestly to beg you to pour forth your prayers to God, through the merits of our holy Father St. Ignatius, and sheltered under the motherly protection of Mary Immaculate, "for vain is the salvation of man."<sup>(15)</sup> And I doubt not that your hearts' promptings lead you to seek this refuge of prayer.

It seems to me, dearest Fathers and Brothers, that as the storm of adversity rages fiercer about us, the prayer contained in the last six verses of Psalm 118 that are recited in Tierce, is very appropriate in these times of ours.

"I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are equity; and in thy truth thou hast humbled me."

It is meet that at the beginning of our prayer we should be our own accusers. For, not in a spirit of self-righteousness, but in humble entreaty, do we pour out our prayer before the face of the Lord. In the spirit of lowliness and with contrite heart, and humbled by the confession of so many sins, we trust that God will raise us up, because the Lord is just, and His judgment is righteous.

"O! let thy mercy be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant."

For having become poor indeed and miserable, and not without our own fault, we implore the mercy of God. In it alone we repose our hope and it is our only consolation. By this versicle we humbly remind God of His promise to St. Ignatius, when He assured His servant that He would be propitious to him at Rome, yes, and to

(13) II. Cor. i. 9.

(14) II. Cor. i. 10.

(15) Psal. lix. 13.



his companions, also. We beseech God graciously to show us His mercies in the future as He has in the past.

“Let thy tender mercies come unto me, and I shall live ; for thy law is my meditation.”

By meditating day and night on the law of God, and discharging faithfully His most adorable will, of which our Constitutions and Rules and the living voice of holy obedience do not suffer us to remain in ignorance, we shall with confidence expect to receive the visitations of His mercy, and shall live.

“Let the proud be ashamed, because they have done unjustly towards me : but I will be employed in thy commandments.”

The haughty enemies of Christ's Church and of God are doing evil things to us. They slander us, they even strive to blot out our name from the face of the earth, because forsooth, we set our faces against their wicked works. Only let us be mindful of God's law, let us “be employed” in it steadfastly and untiringly. We ask that our enemies be confounded ; not that God may condemn them in His fury ; nor smite them in His wrath, but only that they may be confounded, that is, frustrated in their wicked hope of destroying us and humbled in humiliations, and thus they may rise to salvation.

“Let them that fear thee turn to me ; and they that know thy testimonies.”

For among our enemies there are otherwise God-fearing men, men who in the fellowship of faith and similarity of life, are devoted to the same common cause with ourselves ; men, who jealous of our zeal, such is human frailty, or blinded by long-standing prejudice against us and our Institute, or embittered by some fault or indiscretion of some of Ours, have unhappily appeared to league themselves with our enemies. That such men may become more just and fair-minded towards us, should be the subject of our frequent prayer for the greater glory of our common Lord and the welfare of the Church.

“Let my heart be undefiled in thy justifications ; that I may not be confounded.”

For this, dearest Fathers and Brothers, this is *the one thing necessary*<sup>(16)</sup> to each and all. Let this then be our heart's dearest petition, our burning desire and highest ambition, that amid all the dangers of our journey in life, amid the hatred and slanders and assaults of our enemies, nay, amid whatever adversity it may please God to place us, we may keep our souls pure and spotless. And not only by the blamelessness of our exterior lives, and the perfect mastery of word and action, but also by zeal in God's presence for interior virtue, let us keep our souls in peace and humility and patience. And thus hatred, aversion and other violent passions will never touch or poison our hearts.

Thus shall we not be confounded for ever. For if we trust in Him, He, "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after we have suffered a little, will Himself perfect us, and confirm us and establish us. To whom be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen."<sup>(17)</sup>

The servant of all in Christ,

JOHN ROTHMAN.

*The Feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus,*

*Rome, 1847.*

<sup>(16)</sup> Luke x. 42.

<sup>(17)</sup> I. Pet. v. 10.

## XVII.

A LETTER OF OUR VERY REVEREND FATHER JOHN ROTHAAAN  
TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY, ON DE-  
VOTION TO THE MOST PURE HEART OF MARY.

I wrote quite recently to the whole Society exhorting you, dearly beloved Fathers and Brothers, to seek in the Adorable Heart of Jesus a refuge from the many grievous misfortunes that beset us.

But I should think my words of encouragement too few, and the remedy proposed by me insufficient, unless I added a few more words to urge you to go also to the Most Pure Heart of Mary, whose feast is now approaching. And though I am sure you are already glowing with love for that most pure Heart, the present needs of our Society cause me to exhort you to still greater devotion. For, as St. Bernard says, we need a Mediator with Christ, the Mediator, and we shall find none so powerful as Mary.

It is clearly for this reason that whenever in the course of time some new feast was established in honor of Jesus, the Saviour, holy Church, with a true mother's instinct, soon introduced some parallel feast in honor of the Mother of God. For it has always been held as a kind of axiom in the Church that just as we go to the Father through Jesus, so we must go to Jesus through Mary; since Jesus bears not only the character of Mediator, but also of Judge, while Mary has only that of mother—Mother of Jesus and our Mother. Thus, when by divine favor public worship was first paid to the Heart of Jesus, devotion to the Most Pure Heart of Mary soon began to spread far and wide among the faithful. And our own Society, taught by its holy Founder Ignatius to look upon Mary as its mother, has displayed the same untiring zeal in promoting devotion to her Immaculate Heart as that which it has shown in extending the worship of the Adorable Heart of Jesus.

Let us recall, dearly beloved Fathers and Brothers, the manifest indications which God has given us of His will in these latter years. What wonders have been accomplished by the Sodality



established in Paris under the patronage of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, for the conversion of sinners? In a short time so vast and astonishing a harvest of souls was gathered by it in all parts of the world that nothing equal to it is recorded in the history of the Church from the very beginning.

Nay, we ourselves have learned by our own experience what a sure refuge and safeguard we have in the Heart of Mary, our Mother. It was in 1837 while the Asiatic cholera was raging in Rome. Three hundred or more of our Society were living in the city at the time, and most of them, as long as the plague lasted, were going about night and day among the sick and dying, and even among the infected bodies of the dead. We had made a vow in honor of this most pure Heart and were made to feel in a sensible manner its all powerful protection ; for not one of us was in the least degree affected by the plague nor had we to mourn the loss of any one. This was surely beyond all our hopes, and more than other places and persons could boast of. Besides all this, the power of our most gracious Mother was more clearly manifested in inspiring our fearful and trembling brethren with so much courage in the midst of such terrible dangers, that every one was eager to devote, nay to spend, himself in relieving, helping and consoling the plague-stricken. This was enough to edify the faithful, and win for ourselves the admiration of the entire city, which was signified by a public tribute of gratitude.

Have we not, then, every reason to hope that our kind and merciful Mother will be as ready to help us in our present misfortune as she was in those days of peril, if we but appeal to the love of her Immaculate Heart ?

Accordingly I desire, Reverend Fathers and most dear Brothers in Christ, that the coming Feast of the Most Pure Heart of Mary which falls on the Sunday after the octave of her Assumption, be celebrated by us with such solemnity that all may know we have at heart, as our own peculiar work, the increase and spread of this devotion. The Saturday before the feast shall be kept as a fast

day ; for "prayer is good with fasting."<sup>(1)</sup> On the feast itself, the priests will offer their Masses, and the Scholastics and Brothers will say their beads for the present needs of the Society.

Above all, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, let us pray and beseech that most loving Heart to permit us and our whole Society to sing Its praises, asking It at the same time to defend and shield the Society in its present crippled condition and preserve it where it is still allowed to exist.

Let us implore that most tender Heart to incite all the members of the Society to win for themselves the further protection of the most blessed Virgin, by the perfect observance of our rules and by devoting themselves to the service of all men and of Holy Mother, the Church. Finally let all, and especially those of us who are driven before the storm of persecution, beg that most sweet Heart to teach us how to gather from these trials and persecutions fruits of salvation and greater perfection, that so we may draw profit from adversity.

May our most compassionate Mother obtain for all steadfastness in tribulation ; and for those who are hindered from the exercise of their ministry, grace to make good use of their leisure by fortifying their souls, by reviewing their sacred studies, by giving themselves more to prayer, in a word, by fitting themselves more and more to do God's work whenever He will allow them to labor again in His vineyard.

If we may not be the light of the world by our public ministrations, each one must strive to become the salt of the earth by word and example in his private intercourse with men.

Let no one relax, no one grow languid or fall away—unless there be some "who have gone out from our midst but were not of us."<sup>(2)</sup> For if there be a fan in the hand of the Lord wherewith He shall cleanse His threshing floor, our Society shall not take harm thereby—nay it is to be desired above all things "that they also who are approved may be made manifest among us."<sup>(3)</sup>

Whosoever would be and remain in the number of these must ever look up to the most loving Heart of Mary, so like to the Heart of Jesus ; and let him not be content to call upon It in his prayers, but strive with all his might to imitate Its virtues.

I recommend myself most earnestly to your Holy Sacrifices.

Your servant in Christ,

JOHN ROTHAAAN.

*Rome, June, 24, 1848.*

(1) Tob. xii. 8.

(2) John I. Epist. ii. 19.

(3) I. Cor. xi. 19.

## XVIII.

A LETTER OF OUR VERY REVEREND FATHER, PETER BECKX, TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, COMMEMORATING THE TERCENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF ST. IGNATIUS AND EXHORTING TO A RENEWAL WITHIN US OF OUR HOLY FATHER'S SPIRIT.

As the day sacred to the memory of our Holy Father Ignatius draws near—the day which completes the third century since his blessed death and inaugurates the fourth, I feel myself urged by so favorable an opportunity to address to you at least a short letter in order to arouse your filial affection for so dear a father.

For if the reverence we pay to those who have given us our mortal life be pleasing to God, far more pleasing and grateful in His divine sight must be the affection with which we honor him who has begotten us in Jesus Christ unto this spiritual life, and who if we but faithfully follow him will lead us unto that blessed life in heaven to which we are tending. And what think you can be more incumbent upon us as true and faithful sons, than to cherish most dearly the memory of that day on which he was freed from the sorrows of this mortal life, being clothed in immortality and taken up to enjoy the vision of the glory of God's Majesty, for which alone he thirsted when a sojourner in this world?

Can anything be of greater use or profit to ourselves than to reflect upon the splendid rewards which Ignatius has gained in heaven and the virtues by which he merited them? Or what can be of greater advantage than to implore the help and intercession of him whose power to enrich us has become greater now that he is nearer to God, the Almighty Father of mercies?

And although the state of the times in which we live as well as other weighty reasons might dissuade us from adding aught to the solemn services usually held in our public churches for the edification of the faithful, we should find in this very condition of things but stronger reasons for making some special effort within the



domestic walls to arouse within our hearts the devotion of true sons for our Holy Father, and to seek with greater eagerness the fruits of such devotion.

I desire, therefore, and earnestly recommend that at the approach of the feast of our Holy Father, besides the exercises of penance and devotion practised in common by all every year or by each one privately at the direction of his Spiritual Father, some others common to all be prescribed by Superiors whereby Ours may carefully prepare themselves during the space of eight or nine days to celebrate the solemnity in a worthy manner and implore the powerful intercession of our Holy Father.

Moreover, we cannot doubt that if we would render our filial homage more pleasing to God and St. Ignatius as well as more profitable to ourselves, we must direct it in such wise that it may make us prompt to imitate what we are glad to commemorate: that is to say, by our whole manner of life we must not only reproduce his life and virtues which made him so pleasing in God's sight, but also yield ourselves up to be ruled and guided by the spirit with which he served his Lord and Master. This spirit is the rich inheritance which our Blessed Father when dying bequeathed to his sons, the spirit which is the precious treasure of true holiness.

And unless the Society, by our individual coöperation, enriches itself from this treasure, unless it take every care to preserve the same and to draw strength from this store-house of spiritual life, it can never hope to please God, never attain the end for which it was established, never gather those fruits of salvation which the Church has a right to expect of us.

It must be clear to you, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers in Christ, that nothing is more essential to the life, not to say the working, of the body of our Society, than that the spirit which was breathed into it at its birth by St. Ignatius, be preserved and strengthened.

Every day we witness many changes in the world about us, and so, as new conditions arise, we too may employ new

means more suitable to our end as well as more efficacious. This is why men most eminent for wisdom bestow such rich and well deserved praise on the wonderful prudence of St. Ignatius. For he would not limit us by rule to any particular ways or means of attaining the end of the Society, but rather wished both the Society in general and Superiors in particular to consult the requirements of times, places and persons. Nevertheless, it is our duty, in spite of the constant change and caprice of the world, to preserve and keep in its purity that inmost spirit of our holy Father which was the guide and rule of all his actions.

For as the infernal prince of darkness, against whom our Society is arrayed under the banner of Jesus Christ, is ever contriving new weapons to suit the times, yet all the while burns with the same spirit of wickedness : so this our least Society in order to prevail and gain the victory in this warfare, may change its weapons as the times demand, but its spirit, never.

Moreover as that foul fiend who " was a murderer from the beginning,"<sup>(1)</sup> can avail naught by all his schemes of destruction unless thereby he succeed in instilling into men's minds the poison of which he himself is full ; neither can our Society hope to attain its end by external works, however well they be planned and carried out, unless it draw strength and vigor from that fountain of virtue and holiness, the spirit of our holy Father.

Therefore we who profess to be sons of St. Ignatius must strive with all our might to preserve and increase within us that spiritual life and energy the principle of which our Society received through our holy Founder.

Now let us not suppose that any kind of virtue will satisfy the demands of our high vocation, or will enkindle and keep glowing in our hearts the primitive spirit of the Society. That holy Spirit who, according to the Apostle, worketh all in all<sup>(2)</sup> and has from the beginning given some to be apostles, others prophets, others again evangelists, others pastors and doctors,<sup>(3)</sup> continues to distribute in every age and time the gifts and powers that are necessary for the sal-

<sup>(1)</sup> St. John viii. 44.

<sup>(2)</sup> I. Cor. xii. 6.

<sup>(3)</sup> Ephes. iv. 11.

vation of His elect. And because He alone is the source and fountain of all goodness, He so disposes and governs the mystical body of the Church as to cause the image of His own infinite goodness to shine forth brightly in the wondrous variety of its members and their operations. What part in all this work has been assigned by the divine goodness and mercy to our Society through St. Ignatius, you can learn from the words of the Roman Pontiff, Urban VIII. "The ineffable goodness and mercy of God," he says, "which with admirable wisdom disposes all things suitably in their appointed times, having in past ages provided many men eminent for learning and holiness to sow the seed of the Gospel among the nations or to oppose the rising heresiarchs, has not failed to make like provision in our own days: for when . . . the way was opened to the far off coasts of India and . . . to a new world in the west; when Luther . . . and other pestilent men . . . were striving to corrupt the ancient faith, to violate its sanctity, to degrade the profession of a more perfect life and rob the Apostolic See of its authority; then divine Goodness aroused the courageous spirit of Ignatius of Loyola, who while following a soldier's life, was miraculously called from the midst of a career of honor and so entirely abandoned himself to be directed and moulded by God's will, that he came at last to found a new religious order, the Society of Jesus, which besides undertaking many other works of zeal and charity, devotes itself by its institute in a very special manner to the work of converting pagans, reclaiming heretics and upholding the authority of the Roman Pontiff."

These, therefore, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers in Christ, are the works wherein may be seen the spirit of Ignatius, the father and protector of our Society. Let, then, this his Society, despising the allurements of the world and spurning the honors of this short life, devote itself absolutely to do God's will and to defend the authority of His Vicar on earth. Let it stand, as it were, with loins girded, and be prepared night and day to undergo every manner of toil in any part of God's vast vineyard, turning all its efforts and desires to one thing only — the greater



glory of Almighty God, asking no other reward for all its labor save an eternal one in heaven.

And if we would know still more of the peculiar spirit of our Institute, that spirit which we should keep always in view, assuredly Ignatius himself will instruct us in it fully and clearly. I mean that we should consult the Rules and statutes which we have received from him ; for from them we shall easily learn the manner of his life and the method he followed in his work, that thus under his guidance we may follow the same.

In these very Constitutions that wonderful prudence of our holy Father to which I have just referred, shines out most conspicuously ; for he wished to leave to Superiors a certain holy freedom of action in disposing of such matters as belong to the external life and work of the Society and which by their very nature generally depend on the changeable condition of men and things. On the other hand, whatsoever pertains to the interior spirit demanded by our vocation, the spirit which ought to animate and direct us in all our external works, all that, I say, he has not only explained in the clearest terms, but has settled once for all and sanctioned by the weight and authority of laws that are to remain unchanged forever.

For example, that the Society might employ itself with greater liberty and with more abundant fruit in every ministry of the Gospel, he added to the general rules on poverty, that no one could receive even those free gifts by which the ministrations of the Society might seem to be recompensed. Moreover, he not only bade us all love poverty and seek occasions of practising it in every circumstance of life, but in order that this poverty might be guarded more securely in the Society as the firm wall of Religion, and remain forever unimpaired therein, he with truly admirable care and forethought made it unlawful even to deliberate in the Society's congregations about relaxing or moderating it.

As to the virtue of chastity, which should rival the purity of the angels, — in order to safeguard it in the midst of our daily intercourse with men, and to make it more attractive to them, he wished

it to be hedged about and intrenched by the faithful observance of modesty and humility and by the mortification of our senses.

But what shall I say of obedience? You know full well, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, what were the wishes of our blessed Father in regard to this virtue. He was not content with requiring that it should flourish in his sons absolutely perfect to the last degree; but carrying it beyond all the ordinary bounds of religious observance and looking to the greater subjection of our Society, and the more complete self-abnegation of each one in particular, he would have all the Professed bound by solemn vow to execute at once without reluctance or excuse and with all the perfection possible, whatever Christ's Vicar on earth should command as expedient for the salvation of souls and the spread of the faith; even though they should be sent into remote and uncivilized lands there to undergo labor and hardships and perils, nay, even to risk life itself.

And since no temptation is more common or more dangerous to the virtue and perfection of those who live before the eyes of the world than the snare of vain-glory, he wished to remove all danger of ambition by forbidding all most strictly not only to seek or covet any honor whatsoever, even those of a sacred character, but also to receive those that are offered us unasked.

To sum up all in brief, only then shall we be filled with the spirit of the Society to the satisfaction of St. Ignatius, when we shall come to<sup>(4)</sup> "abhor wholly and not in part whatsoever the world loves and embraces and to accept and desire with our whole strength whatsoever Christ, our Lord, loved and embraced."

He wished us, then, while engaging in this holy warfare, to keep before our eyes Christ, our Leader, and thus gain courage not only to trample under foot the allurements of the world, the flesh and empty honour, but even to go so far as to desire ardently and embrace eagerly the very contrary of these, to wit: reproaches and insults, hardships and sufferings. Can anyone, therefore, flatter himself that he possesses the spirit of our Father Ignatius if he still takes

(4) *Summ. Const.* II.

pleasure in the vanities of the world, recoils from labor or inconvenience and clings to his own ease and comfort? Can he be said to be imbued with that spirit who is held fast by love of country; who yields to the demands of flesh and blood; who covets the praises of men but fears and dreads confusion and humiliation; finally who when called upon by his vocation to undertake the most difficult and important enterprises in all parts of the world, hugs the very meanest pursuits and even shows himself a coward and a sluggard when the smallest and most trivial things are to be done for the glory of God?

Be mindful, then, I beseech you, most dearly beloved Fathers and Brothers, be mindful of your calling, and never for a moment lose sight of the high perfection to which we are urged by the example and exhortation of our blessed Father. And whilst you ponder on the great deeds which he accomplished, by God's help and favor, let your hearts be inflamed with an ardent desire to imitate what we all admire so much in him. Let the sweet memory of our blessed Father arouse and excite us, and spur us on, and let it never permit us to rest until by earnest prayer and manly striving we enkindle in our souls that divine fire which ever consumed his soul and which he ardently longed to see glowing in all his sons.

Indeed I hardly see how one not imbued with this spirit of St. Ignatius can possibly observe the external laws of our Institute; but this I hold for certain, that whoever would prove himself to be a true son of Ignatius must do more than merely fulfil the things which he prescribes; he must fulfil them in that interior spirit required by our Institute.

And what is that spirit but the law of charity which the Holy Ghost is accustomed to write and imprint on the hearts of men,<sup>(5)</sup> and to which our blessed Father attached so much importance that in it, rather than in any external Constitutions, he placed all his hopes for the Society's preservation and advance in the way of God's service? Wherefore, not content with having expressed this conviction in the very beginning of the Constitutions, he repeats

(5) Summ. Const. I.



and confirms the same again and again in other places. Above all he would have us bear in mind that it is by no means enough to have embraced this kind of life, in obedience to the motion of divine grace, and, to persevere in the same ; but he insists that we must bend ceaselessly all our efforts to be ruled and carried by the same divine charity in all particulars, great and small—endeavoring always to please the divine Goodness—putting off as much as is possible all love of creatures, that we may bestow our whole affection on their creator.<sup>(6)</sup> For this reason, he orders that all who desire to enter into our Society must be informed that only those can be received who have resolved to consecrate themselves wholly to the divine service and are prepared to make so complete a renunciation of whatever they had in the world that as men dead to the world and to self-love, they may live only for Christ, and have Him in place of all things whatsoever.<sup>(7)</sup> Hence those who are admitted to the Novitiate are to undergo so thorough a training in all the exercises of the religious life that for the love of God they are eager to die that happy death by which the true life, which is Christ, is begotten and fostered within them.

Whether, then, by laying open the inmost recesses of their conscience, or in taking it in good part to be corrected by others and helping to the correction of others, or in any other way, they endeavor to subdue the inclinations of corrupt nature ; they are obliged to do all in the proper spirit of love, with a good will and true desire of advancing in spirit, while in their mental and bodily exercises they must beware of being led by any other intention than that of pleasing God. Nor was it enough for our holy Founder to enjoin solemnly on the whole Society that all the labors which it should undergo, all the works it should undertake, and all the duties it should be called upon to fulfil were to be directed with perfect purity of intention to no other end than the greater glory of God, the salvation of souls and their advancement in virtue ; but he again enjoins the same in the strongest possible language upon every individual member of the Society to whatever

<sup>(6)</sup> Summ. Const. 17.

<sup>(7)</sup> Summ. Const. 8.

condition or degree he may belong. For example, he bids those who are admitted for the temporal works of the Society to remember that in this occupation they are serving and praising their Creator and Lord, for whose love and reverence they have devoted their lives to such labors.<sup>(8)</sup> They who are engaged in the study of literature are reminded that they are to seek no other end therein, save the glory of God and the good of souls.<sup>(9)</sup> Again, teachers must know that their duty is to draw their scholars to the knowledge and love of their Creator and Redeemer, while instructing them in polite letters. Lastly, he charges those who are engaged in the ministry of preaching the word of God to do all in their power to unite themselves to God by charity and purity of intention that so they may become fit instruments for the work of bringing back souls to their Creator.<sup>(10)</sup> And why is this same thing called to mind so repeatedly? For the reason, no doubt, that our holy Father wished us to know most clearly and never forget what that spirit is, which has been given us and which when diffused through the whole Society, even as the soul through all the parts of the body, imparts vigor and activity to all the members, whereby they are quickened and strengthened to undertake and accomplish the most difficult labors for the glory of the divine Majesty.

This is why our blessed Father in the passages just quoted from the Constitutions, while touching briefly but fully upon all matters pertaining to the perfection of our life, at the same time points out the interior spirit which ought to induce us to undertake, and will make us capable of accomplishing the work of our perfection. Thus in one place after telling us to abhor wholly and not in part what the world loves and embraces and to accept and desire with our whole strength whatsoever Christ our Lord, loved and embraced,<sup>(11)</sup> he teaches us very plainly that they who advance in the spiritual life should be influenced by one only motive, the strong love of Jesus Christ: in other words, they must live in the faith of the son of God Who loved us and delivered Himself up for us.<sup>(12)</sup> For consider-

(8) Reg. 1, Coadj.

(9) Reg. 1, Schol.

(10) Reg. 2, Concion.

(11) Summ. Const. 11

(12) Galat. ii. 20.

ing the love of their God suffering for them, they too should be inflamed with love and in their turn refuse neither labor nor danger, nor tribulation, nor distress, nor hunger, nor nakedness—nay, not even death itself ; but being of one heart and mind with Jesus Christ, they should ardently desire and long to reproduce His image in themselves, and to be clothed, as it were, with His garment and livery, that so they may in all things as far as they can by the help of God's grace, imitate and follow Him, since He is the true way that leads men to life. <sup>(13)</sup>

It was with this love of Jesus that Ignatius was wholly on fire ; with this same divine fire he desired to see us all inflamed who serve God in his Society. And that these flames of love might never more be extinguished, that we might always remember Who it is whom we serve and Whose honor and glory we ought to seek in everything ; besides his own spirit, which is the spirit of Christ, he also left us the most sweet name of Jesus as a precious inheritance. Now surely, he cannot worthily bear the name of Jesus who burns not with the love of Jesus ; nor can he who strives not to imitate Jesus and become like unto Him in all things, deserve to be called a companion of Jesus. Moreover, if we are distinguished from the rest of men by our name, we ought also to be conspicuous for the zeal and firmness of purpose with which we imitate Him in everything.

What was it, after all, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, that first drew us away from the world and moved us to enter the Society of Jesus ? Was it not, indeed, this very desire of imitating our Lord Jesus and glorifying His name ? For when we learned that the purpose of the Society was to imitate as closely as possible the life of Jesus Christ, and under His standard, to procure the salvation and perfection of its members besides engaging earnestly in working for the salvation and perfection of others, we were filled with the desire of having a share in this most divine of all divine works.

Now, it not unfrequently becomes necessary for us while further-

(13) Summ. Const. II.



ing this end, to go, after the example of Jesus Christ and His apostles, into the very heart of the world and mingle with all classes of people. Hence, it follows that unless we possess the spirit of our vocation, that spirit so utterly opposed to the spirit of the world, unless we be filled and wholly possessed by it, we are running the greatest risk of being corrupted by the manners of the world which will work our ruin, making us like unto its own children whom we should have rather conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Can we imagine, for instance, while contemplating the illustrious deeds of our Fathers, that they could have stood unsullied in the midst of a world reeking with the foulness of vice, or that they could have succeeded in extending the kingdom of Jesus Christ so widely, unless they had been filled and animated by that spirit which they breathed in from the teaching and example of St. Ignatius? In that spirit they lived for God alone, mortifying in themselves the works of the flesh; and crucified with Christ, they scorned the flattery of the world and heeded not its threats.

In the last place, what is it that causes those who love Christ and His Church, to show us so much favor and to further our holy endeavors with so much confidence and generosity? Is it not because they believe us to be filled with the same spirit that actuated St. Ignatius and his first companions, and believe the sons to be not unlike their fathers—that is, “men crucified to the world and to whom the world itself is crucified; who have put off their own affections, that they might put on Christ, dead to themselves that they might live unto justice. Men who in labors, in watchings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned and in the word of truth, exhibit themselves as the ministers of God; and by the armor of justice on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, in prosperity and in adversity, push forward with mighty strides to their heavenly home, and, by every means and exertion, urge on others to the same goal, ever keeping in view the greatest glory of God.”

Such are the opinions and expectations entertained of the sons of Ignatius ; and hence it is that good men long for the Society of Jesus and seek its ministrations, while the wicked hate and fear it. Happy we, if these fears of the wicked be not without cause and the hopes of the just be not unfounded !

Ignatius calls to us, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers ; he who cherishes us with the tenderest love of a father, calls upon us from his throne of glory in heaven and bids us follow him. Unfurling the banner of the cross, he invites us to look upon Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.<sup>(14)</sup> Let us gather around Him, dear Brothers, and let us not bring reproach upon our name. The days are evil and great is the number of our enemies ; but “ God is faithful by whom we are called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”<sup>(15)</sup> There is no reason to fear while following Jesus under the leadership of Ignatius. God is faithful, and if we remain faithful to Him, He “ will make also with the temptation issue.”<sup>(16)</sup> He calls us to the combat, and even while we are doing battle, He is strengthening and protecting us and leading us to certain victory.

Let us go then to our most kind and gracious Father and commend to him ourselves and all we have, together with our entire Society which he himself founded. Let us ask him to shield and defend it by his most powerful intercession and pour forth his spirit upon all his sons ; so that combating upon earth, by his help and imitation, we may deserve one day to be crowned with him in heaven.

I commend myself, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, most earnestly to your Holy Sacrifices and prayers.

The Servant of all in Christ,

PETER BECKX.

*Rome,*

*June, 8, 1856.*

(14) Heb. xii. 2.

(15) I. Cor. i. 9.

(16) I. Cor. x. 13.

## XX.

A LETTER OF VERY REVEREND FATHER BECKX TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY, ON THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS AS OUR REFUGE IN DANGER.

“He that ruleth,” as the apostle says, lives ever “with carefulness;”<sup>(1)</sup> but we, dear Fathers and Brothers, have now long endured anxiety and distress, as you know full well, because of the unhappy circumstances of time and place in which our lot has been cast. For as yet it has not seemed good to divine Providence to permit the breaking of that longed-for day, whose dawn shall comfort us in our ceaseless troubles. Nay, if we look well into the world of men and events around us, fresh evils meet our gaze, and others arouse our fears for the future. Therefore, amid the misfortunes, which in many places are harassing our Society, and because of the uncertainty which surrounds coming events, —racking the soul with forebodings of evil,—there is nothing for which you or I should more earnestly strive than to knock without ceasing at the gate of the divine clemency and mercy, and with humble hearts and an unwavering trust in God’s help, grasp those sacred portals with holy violence, as did the Royal Psalmist whose manifold examples should beget in us a most unfailing confidence. And in the darkness and instability of political affairs, we must not attempt by human considerations to discover whence or how the looked-for help is to come; for the thoughts of men grope timidly and their fore-cast of the future is clouded with uncertainty; but God is mighty and we trust that in His goodness He will save us from every storm; and surely He will not be deaf to the prayers of His servants, but will command the winds and the sea, and there will be a great calm.<sup>(2)</sup>

But in this perilous crisis of political affairs, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers, I have been wonderfully cheered and consoled by the thought of that Sacred Heart, Which spoke those words so

<sup>(1)</sup> Rom. xii., 8.

<sup>(2)</sup> Matt. viii., 26.



fraught with heavenly sweetness and love : “ Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” <sup>(3)</sup> For you know with what tender compassion it has been His wont to cherish the distressed and in wondrous ways to help and comfort them. It is from this divine Heart that have come those yearning words of mercy, on which we have so often dwelt in holy meditation : “ I have compassion on the multitude.” <sup>(4)</sup> And have we not in our trials often felt the favor of this same mercy? He is that Jesus, Who, while He dwelt on earth, “ went about doing good,” <sup>(5)</sup> and Who, though He ascended into heaven to make intercession for us, has not left us orphans <sup>(6)</sup> upon earth, but has promised to be with us “ all days, even to the consummation of the world.” <sup>(7)</sup> And so even on the day before He suffered for our salvation, did He institute the Most August Sacrament, that the contemplation of the boundless love of His divine Heart, revealed in this mystery, might enkindle our confidence and love, and lead us to seek at His hands aid in all our needs.

The Heart of Jesus lies open to us, dear Fathers and Brothers ; let us, then, approach this inexhaustible fountain of goodness with confidence unwavering, and let us raise our voices in that cry for help : “ Lord Jesus, save us, we perish !” <sup>(8)</sup> Help us who are Thine, for under the shadow of Thy Name hast Thou gathered us together, to follow Thee, and, while holding fast to Thy commands, to do Thy work thoroughly. And we cannot doubt that He will receive our prayers with all kindness, if we consecrate ourselves to Him from our inmost hearts, remembering with lively faith what rich blessings He has promised to all, who, with filial and trustful devotion, fly to His Sacred Heart ; and what especially He has promised to us : for with unspeakable goodness He has deigned to entrust to us the task of spreading this devotion. Let us, therefore, in our distress and amid the perils that beset the world, turn lovingly to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as to a treasure placed in our keeping ; seek in It a most safe refuge, and there, with no laggard faith, beg

<sup>(3)</sup> Matt. xi., 28.

<sup>(4)</sup> Mark viii., 2.

<sup>(5)</sup> Acts x., 38.

<sup>(6)</sup> Joan. xiv., 18.

<sup>(7)</sup> Matt. xxviii., 20.

<sup>(8)</sup> Matt. viii., 25.

and confidently expect for ourselves, for the whole Society, for the entire Church safety, preservation, peace, and whatever else we desire.

Each one can do this as his devotion prompts : and undoubtedly all have done this, both in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and in their other prayers. Still, it has seemed well to prescribe some uniform mode of petition, that the united prayer of all may more readily obtain that which we all alike long for and seek.

It is my wish, therefore, that in all Colleges and Houses of the Society, until the end of the coming month of December unless other orders are given, at a fitting time and place, the Blessed Sacrament be exposed for the adoration of Ours every Friday, and that some prayers in honor of the Sacred Heart be recited, followed by Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Moreover, every day at Litanies, after the prayer to the Sacred Heart, let there be recited the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be to the Father three times, with the intention that we may all safely pass through the stress and storm that now encompass us and the dangers which threaten us and, united once more in peace and tranquillity, we may be allowed to live according to the spirit of our Institute and to the greater glory of the Divine Name. And every week I would have the priests offer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus one Mass, and those who are not priests one pair of beads for the same intention. If any priests be hindered in fulfilling this charge, a second intention in the Mass or other prayers will suffice. And since, in the words of the Holy Spirit, "prayer is good with fasting,"<sup>(9)</sup> to our supplications let us join works of penance, which the Superiors will determine, or which each one, as his devotion suggests, will undertake with their advice. And by these and other prayers and pious exercises, for that love which we bear the Society, let one and all labor with one aim, striving to move the Sacred Heart to mercy.

And may all these prayers and holy exercises be for us a token, to urge us to practice with ever greater zeal those virtues which are especially dear to the Sacred Heart. These, after the three religious

<sup>(9)</sup> Tob. xii., 8.

vows, are humility and charity which are so often praised in the Gospel. While improvement in our life and renewal of spirit will be for us, according to the beautiful words of the Apostle St. John, a pledge that our prayers are heard ; for thus he speaks : “ Dearly beloved, if our heart do not reprehend us, we have confidence towards God : and whatsoever we shall ask, we shall receive of Him : because we keep His commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in His sight.” <sup>(10)</sup>

I commend myself, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers, to your Holy Sacrifices and prayers.

Your Servant in Christ,  
PETER BECKX.

*Rome,*  
*August 28, 1870.*

<sup>(10)</sup> I. John iii., 21, 22.



**XXI.**

A LETTER OF VERY REVEREND FATHER PETER BECKX TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY, ON NEW TRIBULATIONS AND ON THE SOLACE TO BE GAINED FROM THE BEATIFICATION OF BLESSED PETER FABER.

Toward the close of last year I took occasion from the calamities which afflict the Church and our Society alike, to address you, Reverend Fathers and dearest Brothers in Christ, in order that I might exhort you to patience, and stir up within your hearts confidence in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and in the powerful intercession of Mary the Immaculate Virgin ; that we might bear the present calamities with fortitude and be prepared for those that were threatening. The event indeed has justified the fears which I then expressed, and we are now witnessing and experiencing their sad realization. For the storm that has since been let loose against the Society has not been calmed nor abated in violence ; on the contrary, it has spread far and wide and is raging with more fierceness. You know, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers in Christ, with what cruel injustice we have been treated in the Province of Germany. In that country, after our Brethren had indefatigably toiled full twenty years for the salvation of souls, at home and abroad, without offence or complaint ; when the memory of their labors was still fresh in all minds : labors which they had undergone at the risk and even at the cost of their lives, on the battle-field, in camps and hospitals, with such untiring courage and charity that they were publicly honored by generals of the army and ministers of the realm ; these very services so glorious in themselves and so useful to the State, which ought to have brought respect and esteem to the Society and to the Catholic religion, so aroused the hatred of heretics and secret societies, that in their lodges they swore to bring about, by fair means or foul, our destruction ; and in fact through their plottings, an iniquitous law expelling

Ours from their houses has been passed in the parliament of the new empire. Nor did this satisfy the enemies of our Order ; for, and this is a very rare occurrence in the history of persecutions, in some places our fathers have been forced not only to abstain from preaching and the exercise of public ministry, but even from hearing confessions and saying Mass in private. We have, however, this consolation that our persecutors are heretics and secret societies, who avow themselves hostile to us because we oppose their false doctrines and treacherous manœuvres, and because we uphold the divinely revealed prerogatives of the Apostolic See. That our Brethren were undeservedly expelled nobody can doubt, seeing that our persecutors could bring no accusation against us in parliament, nor would they permit our case to be tried before a court of justice, although all Catholics and not a few Protestants demanded that right openly and urgently in their legislative halls ; so firmly convinced were our enemies that besides their hatred for religion, they had no other cause to condemn and suppress us.

As to what has been done here in Rome against the Society during the past months, I think you are not altogether ignorant. When I wrote to you last year, we were not yet expelled from our houses. But a little later the Novitiate of Saint Andrew, which besides Stanislaus and Aloysius had formed so many other illustrious men to every kind of sanctity, and in which, not so very long ago, the pious King Charles Emmanuel IV. of Savoy, laid down his crown, and after spending the last four years of his life under its roof in the practice of rare holiness, died October 6, 1819, and there deserved to be buried in the humble garb of a Jesuit ; this house, I say, dear to us by so many titles, has been wrested from us by a royal decree on the plea of public utility. And now nearly the whole of the Professed House consecrated to the adorable name of Jesus, has on a similar pretext, been taken from us by force, there being left for the present only a few rooms, which are insufficient to accommodate those members of the Society who have hitherto lived there ; and they have taken away all that space which ought to be at the disposal of Congregations and of Fathers

who come to the city on business. Besides all this, it is well known that they are about to introduce a bill for the abolition of religious orders in general ; and as their motive is hostility towards us and the Church, we may expect new calamities in the future. Elated by their success in Germany, spurred on too by the encouragement received from powerful ministers, the secret societies now hope to do in other countries also, what, by trampling upon justice, they have been able to accomplish in Germany ; hence we have reason to apprehend the gravest perils in many lands. May God in His mercy avert them !

Nor is this unjust persecution of our Order confined to Europe. Through the influence of evil men it has found its way into other parts of the world. In the Republic of Guatemala on the overthrow of the lawful government, the revolutionists have managed amid riotous violence to expel our Brethren from their homes and even from the country itself, where for the space of twenty years they had labored without offence for religion and higher education, doing untold good to the republic. Nobody can doubt that all this has been done by the secret societies out of hatred for religion ; since the very same sentence has suddenly been pronounced against the pious Archbishop of Guatemala, and a little later against the Dominicans and Franciscans, who had deserved so well of the republic by their labors in the cause of religion.

These are the principal evils which have befallen the Society, during this very year ; and the cause we have given is that by the grace of God we have been devoted to Jesus Christ and His Church and have upheld their authority. In the midst of these calamities, sources of consolation have not been wanting : besides those enumerated in my other letter, I should mention in a special way the extraordinary sympathy of good people with our Order, and especially in the empire of Germany. For not only have the bishops protested against our suppression, both in public and in letters to the emperor, but also the entire Catholic nobility and the more distinguished citizens, nay, to speak more truly, all Catholics have raised their voice against the injustice done us and have vindicated



our innocence. Moreover, it has pleased the divine goodness to show our Society a singular pledge of good will by giving us a new Blessed to be a glory and an ornament of our Order, through whose example and patronage we may learn to do and to suffer like heroes.

The first born of our Blessed Father Ignatius, Peter Faber, who since his death has been venerated and invoked by his fellow-countrymen on account of his holiness, is now, by a decree of the Apostolic See, a copy of which I send you with this letter, declared to be worthy of the name and the devotion due to a Blessed Confessor. With great gratitude, then, let us exclaim with the apostle: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation: that we also may be able to comfort them who are in all distress, by the exhortation wherewith we also are exhorted by God."<sup>(1)</sup> You will easily understand, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers, what is the exhortation with which we are lovingly admonished by God, if you but cast a glance at this wonderful example of virtue divinely given to our Society. Assuredly the good God, by this new favor, shows that He loves the Society and why He loves it; and accordingly he admonishes us to mould our lives according to this model of religious perfection, and to imitate closely the sanctity which we admire in Blessed Peter. Ponder, therefore, the humility, the patience, the obedience, the zeal for God's glory, the charity, in a word, the genuine spirit of the Society of Jesus, which Blessed Peter imbibed from our holy Father Ignatius, so that at the beck of that same holy Father he evangelized the principal nations of Europe, spreading everywhere the good odor of Christ. But while you admire these virtues in him, who had fewer helps than the Institute of the Society and the example of our forefathers now afford us, I beg of you to form yourselves with all care after his image. The worse the times in which we live, the more cunning our enemies in plotting evil against us, the greater also should be our love and observance of the Institute.

<sup>(1)</sup> II. Corinth. i., 3, 4.

Much more now than at other times does our adversary the devil prowl about seeking whom he may devour : <sup>(2)</sup> watch, therefore, and pray that you enter not into temptation. <sup>(3)</sup> We must watch and attend to every detail of our lives, that there may be nothing in us to displease God, or to give the world, which hates us, a pretext for maligning us. By earnest prayer we shall obtain the grace to begin and finish this work, and to find at length, for the Society and the Church, the peace we desire. I urged you in another letter to seek a refuge in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to consecrate yourselves to His love ; and it was not without great consolation that I noticed how quickly you hearkened to my invitation. Meanwhile, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers, the storm rages and we are hemmed in by dangers on every side ; still if we have not yet obtained the liberty so ardently prayed for, let us not lose heart, but let us rather have recourse with even greater fervor to the meek Heart of Jesus. He defers favors to try our confidence and to excite in us a greater love of prayer, in order to rouse us to higher sanctity and fit us better to obtain what we ask for His glory.

I earnestly commend myself and the whole Society to your prayers and holy Sacrifices.

I am, Reverend Fathers and dearest Brothers in Christ,

The servant of you all,

PETER BECKX.

*Rome,*

*Feast of St. Francis Borgia, 1872.*

<sup>(2)</sup> I. Petr. v. 8.

<sup>(3)</sup> Matth. xxvi. 41.

**XXII.**

LETTER OF VERY REVEREND FATHER PETER BECKX TO THE  
PROVINCIALS OF THE SOCIETY ON THE SAFETY AND AD-  
VANCEMENT OF THE SOCIETY AND THE MEANS MORE CON-  
DUCIVE THEREUNTO.

During the past year I was awaiting the arrival of our Fathers Procurators in Rome, that they might be bearers of counsels from me to the Provinces, concerning certain things that regard the well-being and advancement of the Society, which the present time seems to demand. And though the Congregation of Procurators had to be put off, for reasons known to all, I do not, therefore, hold myself freed from discharging my duty, or in putting it off to another time. In the letter, however, which for this reason I address to your Reverence and to all Superiors, it is my chief aim that you see to the strict and faithful fulfilment of the Decrees of the last General Congregation, and that its earnest admonitions be carefully heeded.

I shall begin by insisting on that, which, necessary at all times, the present imperatively demands, namely, the strenuous striving with unabated effort to secure and ever to retain close union with God. For if the manners, character and pursuits of the world are wont to withdraw the mind from this holy exercise, surely the great and almost universal upheaval of all things which we now witness, will, unless we be on our guard, more than ever scatter our energies in various directions and on a multiplicity of cares. Still the very difficulties that seem to hinder our holy communion with God, should be a spur to our diligence and zeal in preserving and perfecting it. For the same things that render union with God more arduous, do but more clearly reveal its necessity. What sadder lot, I ask, could be ours than to become fickle with the capricious children of the world around us, and, if not to be deprived of it, to enjoy, at least, in smaller measure that only good, for which we have left the world? And if many souls are a prey to



fear of the evils, which seem to menace us, should we not all the more eagerly seek Him and cling to Him, Who alone is our refuge and our strength?<sup>(1)</sup> And since everything about us seems unstable and tottering, let us fix our whole mind on Him in whom "there is no change, nor shadow of alteration."<sup>(2)</sup>

To this close and steadfast union with God must be referred, besides many other things contained in the Constitutions themselves, what the last General Congregation in its forty-fourth Decree enjoined concerning religious observance, or rather again insisted upon as the commands of our forefathers. Though this union of the soul with God is chiefly attained by meditation on heavenly things and by the assiduous practice of prayer, still it is plain that diligence in guarding regular discipline aids greatly in securing the fruit of prayer. For it is this that not only affords occasions for constant self-denial and mortification both of sense and affection, but removes much that would withdraw our mind from God, keeping us aloof from worldly strife more effectually than cloister walls could do. Now, if all the rules, which bear on religious observance, are fraught with this power, that enables us to fix our soul on God, then must those be especially remembered, in which our holy Father describes that becoming and modest behavior of the outward man for which a religious should strive. For when these rules are scrupulously observed, then those gates of the soul, the eyes and ears, and the tongue also, are guarded, and the emotions of the soul are more readily held in check, as their outward manifestation is restrained. Thus the mind is preserved in peace and internal humility and can hold converse with God and His saints without let or hindrance.

Now if we must insist on so diligent an observance of rules within the walls of our houses, what fears, I ask, must we not entertain for those, who neglect watching over themselves, when they are outside our houses and in the midst of the world? And here is another cause for concern, that Ours mingle with seculars more freely than is needful, and that in their visits they are not so

(1) Orat. Dom. xxii. Pentec.

(2) St. James i. 17.

much impelled by their official duties, as allured by the love of an unrestrained intercourse. Now since this is, without question, as dangerous for religious men, as it is unworthy of them, the Fathers of the Congregation decreed that a limit be put to the over-frequent visits which, it is said, that Ours make to externs in some places ; and that such visits be allowed much less frequently and with far greater caution, especially to the younger among us. And here the same Congregation once more earnestly enjoined an exact observance of all that our Constitutions and Rules prescribe concerning the necessity of a companion for those who go out of the house. And I beg and entreat all Superiors that, moved by the memory of the sad accidents and grievous misfortunes which we have suffered, they prize highly this rule of a companion and see to it that it is faithfully kept. And with prudent foresight let us remove from our subjects, whose Fathers in Christ we are called and are, the perils into which the incautious heedlessly run.

There is another evil, akin to that which I have just described, which has long since filled me with anxiety. For I notice in some Provinces the rather common practice which I would have entirely abolished, of permitting Ours to undertake journeys in company with the pupils of our colleges. And so it happens that sometimes one of Ours, quite young as yet himself and inexperienced, is allowed to make a journey to a distant country with a college-boy. There is no need of wasting words in pointing out the many grave dangers and abuses, to which such a course of action is exposed. Hence that some restraint at least be imposed, I have seen fit to issue a prohibition, and I hereby forbid Provincials to grant permission for such journeys, unless for the gravest reasons, and then never in secular dress. Furthermore, the Provincial will inform the General as often as he gives permission.

The same Congregation in its fifteenth Decree approved the Postulate of certain Provinces, requesting that limits be set within which Ours, especially the younger members, might read newspapers, magazines, and other such publications. On this matter therefore I have conferred both with the Provincials and with the

Fathers Assistants conformably to the tenor of the same Decree ; and in a short time each Provincial in his own Province will make known the measures, which, with due regard for the difference between persons and places, we have judged necessary. But while I commend this earnestly to the watchful zeal of all Superiors, I must also call their attention to a truth, which they cannot for a moment doubt, that if Ours would make progress in spirit and in learning, it is of the highest importance that their reading be guided by cautious discernment and careful judgment. How sad it would be, nay, what fears we should entertain not only for their religious spirit, but even for their vocation, if Ours too (what alas ! we witness now-a-days in so many seculars), shunning the severer studies and abandoning works noted for their depth and solidity of treatment, were to fritter away time as precious as it is fleeting in the perusal of every book and pamphlet of the hour, were to waste their energies, enfeeble their minds, and bewilder rather than train the intellect by a mass of indigestible information. Let this then be the work of Superiors, of Prefects of Studies, and Spiritual Fathers, that Ours, the untrained particularly, be not left to themselves in the choice of the books they read, and that, moreover, they be carefully instructed, as to what books are helpful and what are harmful. Thus, while banishing all reading which, if not mischievous, is at least profitless, trifling and frivolous, they will of their own accord turn to the studies I have mentioned, studies, which are useful and worthy of our vocation.

Now if this caution is demanded in what we read, its necessity is far greater in our writings. And it is to be so observed, that whether we write for publication, for exercise, or some other purpose, our writings should be in perfect harmony with our holy, nay, divine vocation, both in our choice of subject and method of treatment. This will be effectually secured, if the Rules be faithfully observed, which I issued in obedience to the spirit of the last Congregation, in my Ordination of the year 1854. Now both in this Ordination and in the Institute itself there are several things set down as the duty of Censors, which may prove at times dis-



agreeable to the natural sensitiveness of writers. And so the experience of what has happened in some Provinces impels me to warn the Censors in their turn not to add needlessly or perhaps unjustly to the burden of authors. And of this would they be guilty, if they were to delay too long in making their review ; if their criticisms were too harsh, or if they would force their opinions on the writers. The rule, it is true, demands that they be exacting rather than indulgent. But this rigor is to guide the Censor only in judging the doctrine of the writer according to that commonly received among the most approved authors, and in determining the merit of the work by the fairly sustained judgment of prudent readers, without being biassed by mere feelings or private opinions. For thus he would only consider that as safe doctrine, which could meet his approval, and no other composition than what is in harmony with his taste would be allowed.

As regards the money paid by publishers, let Superiors be careful that, while granting to writers some use of it, not in itself opposed to the laws of religious poverty, they do not afford them an opportunity of establishing money deposits, which are at variance with the spirit of our Institute and are directly opposed to the twenty-sixth Decree of the last Congregation. When, however, this money is employed in buying books of use for the writer, let the Rule laid down in the Ordinations of the Generals, <sup>(2)</sup> be observed ; namely, that these books be put in the library of the house, and be not carried from one house to another.

Since by the twenty-fourth Decree of the same Congregation, watches, not exceeding in price the common value, are not to be held forbidden to Ours, I have deemed it well to lay down these Rules for the guidance of Superiors :

First, the local Superior may grant the use of a watch to those of Ours, who, in his opinion, stand in need of it.

Secondly, none of Ours shall receive a watch from his friends or family without the approval of the Superior. And the fact that a watch is proffered someone by externs, should not be considered

<sup>(2)</sup> Cap. iv. § 15.

a just reason for permitting its use ; but the same Rules are to be observed in this matter as in all else that belongs to common life.

Thirdly, the ownership of the watches which Ours use, rests with the house where those who use them dwell. Hence they may not be carried from one house to another during changes of residence, unless the Superior for some special reason allow it, or the Provincial judge it advisable to make a dispensation in favor of some one, because of the employment or duty with which he is charged.

And since I have begun to speak of poverty, I cannot refrain from heartily commending to all the twenty-fifth Decree of the Congregation, while recalling to their memory the Rules which regard the practice of poverty. And in particular I must warn Superiors strictly to preserve common life in regard to furniture, food and clothing, and I beg of them to avoid and remove from themselves and their subjects whatever is singular, superfluous, and costly. And if these faults are to be avoided in all things, how pressing is the necessity that our dwellings and colleges be in accord with poverty and religious simplicity, adapted, it is true, to our needs and our occupations, but never built with too much expensiveness and elegance of architecture. For any violation of this rule of our Institute, with regard to buildings, thrusts itself before the eyes of all, and is corrected with difficulty, if corrected at all.

It is my ardent desire, that all of Ours may be thoroughly persuaded that only that form of poverty of which I have just spoken can attain in its fulness the end of our vocation. And grave, indeed, is the error of those, who are so wrought upon by the delusive appearance of a seeming good, that they imagine the Society can win fair fame and influence by I know not what worldly show and outward splendor. For religious men gain honor, not only before God, but in the sight of men, by that very manner of life, which they avow as their only aim, namely, that they be found resembling Him, Who being rich, became poor, for our sakes, that

through His poverty we might be rich.<sup>(3)</sup> Then, truly, shall we win the hearts of the faithful of Christ, when they see that we are true followers of Christ; when our lives bear witness that we run not after the goods of this world, but choose toil and hardships rather than the honors and ease of this life, that, through our ministry, they may more plentifully receive the gifts of heaven. Would that, Reverend Fathers in Christ, would that for this end we were ever alert and diligent; that all our efforts were directed towards it, for thus would the image of Jesus Christ, poor and humble, be brought to a perfect likeness, both in ourselves, and in those whom the Society has entrusted to our charge. For it is this resemblance alone that makes us pleasing in the divine sight. It is this alone, by which we can cling to God, so that our spirit be made one with His, and, while it wavers not amid the manifold hardships, trials, and sufferings of this life, may taste the sweetness of that peace which is the priceless pledge of unending rest.

Still, before I conclude, I must repeat and commit to the faithfulness of all Superiors a charge, which I earnestly urged on the Fathers of the Congregation as they were about to return to their Provinces, that they would employ their most zealous efforts in the training of Ours. And permit me here, Reverend Fathers, to give utterance to the thoughts which frequently recur to my mind on this subject. First of all I must require the exact observance of the Rules that govern the examination of those who apply for admission into the Society; and let those only be received, who can be properly formed in its spirit, manner of life, and ministry. And in this matter, to use the words of St. Francis Borgia, "if one proceed with an intention other than that required by our Constitutions, the door is thrown open to certain ruin." And when, after the trials of the novitiate, they are found worthy of being admitted to the vows of Scholastics, the Society itself tells us that there is nothing it desires more, no work it would advance with greater zeal, than that these our younger members should strive to foster and increase from day to day that

<sup>(3)</sup> II. Cor. viii. 9.



fervor of spirit which inflamed them in the beginning.<sup>(4)</sup> Moreover, if all clearly understand and are thoroughly convinced that those only are suited to the duties peculiar to our vocation who, besides fervor of spirit and virtue, possess in no moderate degree learning and culture, I would have those, whose concern it is, to weigh and ponder carefully this truth, that we cannot look for that learning in Ours which the offices of the Society demand, unless the pursuit of letters be guided by method, and that order followed exactly which is set down in the laws that have come down to us from our forefathers. Finally, although virtue and learning prepare us for our duties, still there is scarcely anyone who will engage in them with fruit and satisfaction, unless he be instructed beforehand in the office he is to undertake, and, in discharging it, allow himself to be governed by the advice of those who are experienced. Hence we see that this is also a part, nor the least either, of that training by which the members of the Society are formed, and to which Superiors should attach great importance.

Therefore it will be the first care of the Provincials, that those, to whom the education of our youth is entrusted, are men chosen and well-trying. Furthermore, in visiting their Provinces they must inquire and carefully examine whether all the ordinations made concerning the instruction of Ours, both in the spiritual life and in letters, are religiously observed. But this twofold care will be wholly fruitless, unless the Provincial in his disposal of persons, is careful not only to avoid withdrawing Novices from their Probation and Juniors from their studies before the time, but also, when the studies are completed, to assign each one to the duty for which his talents seem most to fit him, and to retain him in the office in which he is successful. And here must be mentioned the serious complaint of many, without as well as within the Society, that almost every year so great is the change of persons and offices in some Provinces, that in most houses the greater number of Ours is changed, while they are forced to perform many and widely different duties in the space of a few years. Now, though I am aware

<sup>(4)</sup> Congr. iv. deer. xvi.

that this cannot always be entirely avoided, especially in Provinces not yet thoroughly established ; still, when it is of frequent occurrence, it brings with it this very serious inconvenience among many others, that while Ours are constantly passing from one employment to another, they cannot become masters of any one, but often growing disgusted and disheartened, no longer seriously strive to perfect themselves. Let Superiors of Provinces, therefore, look to this as a matter of the highest moment, when they appoint to office and dispose of their subjects.

However, it must not be concealed that whatever be the care and watchfulness of the Provincial, it will be vain and without fruit, unless aided by the tireless industry of local Superiors. For it has happened more than once, that when Rectors of schools and colleges had complained to me of Masters and Prefects of Discipline not well trained, there were others who not long after said of these same Rectors, that, though keen enough to observe the faults of their subjects, they were not so quick to correct them, and especially that they took little pains either to help the Scholastics in their spiritual life, or direct them in their literary studies, or, finally, to train them in the art of teaching, and governing boys. Now if Superiors, while neglecting this care of Ours, either remain in their rooms engrossed in private labors, or employ themselves in the sacred ministry outside the house, let them take care, I beseech them, that, after laboring much for others they do not run the risk of reproof from the Society for neglecting the chief part of their duty. Let them beware lest they fall under the severe censure of the Apostle who condemns those who have not care of their own.<sup>(5)</sup> For be it granted that one's training in the Novitiate and Scholasticate has been not merely good but excellent, if, through many years, it is not continued and perfected by a prudent and active charity, we can form no hopes that the Society will gain men, formed as the Institute demands. Wherefore, I entreat and implore you all, Reverend Fathers in Christ, by that love which you feel for the Society and which fills you with a desire that the

<sup>(5)</sup> I. Tim. v. 8.

glory of the divine Name be spread far and wide, to bend all your energies and strive with unremitting zeal for this end that the subjects, who are committed to your fatherly providence, may be advanced and brought to perfection in every virtue, in learning, and in holy prudence. Thus will the Society, as a body with limbs well-knit and moulded, grow daily more vigorous in doing the work it has undertaken to perform. And may God our Lord send wisdom out of His holy heaven, that she may be with you, and may labor with you <sup>(6)</sup> "and may you be always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not vain in the Lord." <sup>(7)</sup>

I commend myself and the whole Society to your Holy Sacrifices.

Your Reverence's Servant in Christ,

PETER BECKX.

*Rome,*

*February 5, 1860.*

<sup>(6)</sup> Sap. ix. 10.

<sup>(7)</sup> I. Cor. xv. 58.



## XXIII.

LETTER OF OUR VERY REVEREND FATHER ANTHONY M. ANDERLEDY TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY ON THE MARTYRDOM OF BLOOD OF BLESSED EDMUND CAMPION AND COMPANIONS AND THE UNBLOODY MARTYRDOM TO BE UNDERGONE BY US.

The loving and fatherly providence of God, which is wont to sweeten bitterness and to soften pain, has, in the midst of the grief and sorrow of these evil days, given us uncommon cause for rejoicing. Towards the end of last year we received the welcome intelligence that several of our martyrs had gained, even on earth, the honors of the Blessed, and that a papal decree had been promulgated concerning this happy event. It was what we had been longing for these many years; though, even in better times, we had scarcely looked for the realization of our hopes. Our Blessed Martyrs, Edmund and companions, are honored at last on earth with the splendor of that celestial glory won three centuries ago. The event fills the Church militant with joy; and she exults in the palms and crowns of these her martyred children. Now too all that is Catholic in England exults, and is cheered by the sight of these witnesses to its faith. Now the Society of Jesus exults in this rich heritage of commendation and glory. Now is the day of triumph for the English Province, whose fruitful motherhood has been blest by offspring of such heroic mould; now the day of triumph for Ireland, which Blessed Edmund loved so well, where he dwelt for a time, with the heroic faith of whose people he wished to become penetrated, and under the name and protection of whose apostle, St. Patrick, he avoided the gravest dangers, when safety seemed miraculous.

For this undying benefit we all return thanks to God, and praise Him; we proclaim Him the most high Lord, benign, merciful, and wonderful in his saints.

Yet, in this universal rejoicing, the weighty thought will arise in every generous mind, that we must not be satisfied with mere joy, but strive to show ourselves worthy of such brothers. For they who are heirs to the glory, have inherited also the duty of emulation. In what manner, then, may we compass this? They indeed, by enduring cruel torments, have drunk the cup of suffering to the dregs, and, slain in sacrifice, have confirmed their faith by their blood.

But for this martyrdom of blood they had prepared themselves by undergoing the unbloody martyrdom which lay in the earnest, unflagging endeavor to conform themselves to the model set forth in our rules. To speak only of Blessed Edmund : Father Francis Avellianedo, his confessor in Germany, never tired of telling how, when Edmund was a novice, he was never seen to perform any action that did not bear the stamp of virtue : how in everything he was an example of poverty, obedience and modesty ; and was gifted with a purity of conscience so admirable as almost to surpass belief. Nor does Father Avellianedo speak with any uncertainty ; since he was for a long time confessor to our Blessed Martyr, and knew all the secrets of his heart. That no stain ever tarnished the lustre of his virginity was the constant testimony of all those who were acquainted with him. At Prague one of the community who knew Blessed Edmund intimately, painted a lily and a palm about the desk where he studied. Another rising by night wrote on the door of the room where Campion was sleeping these words : " Father Edmund Campion, Martyr."

Nor were his praises recounted by those only who lived under the same roof, but by externs also and enemies. Angel was the name he went by with his hosts in Dublin ; angel was the title his jailor, a Lutheran, gave him ; whilst a noted Catholic preacher of the time said publicly that he was beyond all praise. On the last day of Blessed Edmund's life, the Protestant Archbishop of York, in spite of his intense hatred of Catholics, exclaimed : " Alas, how much goodness is dragged this morning to the gibbet." In the eyes of Catholics Campion was an unflinching defender of the

Apostolic See. Nor did heretics think otherwise ; for, when they were on his track, in order to rouse the people's hatred, they styled him the right hand of the Sovereign Pontiff. These facts are taken almost literally from Bombinus. I omit other details ; for it is evident that Blessed Edmund—and the same may be said of his companions—was a martyr before the hangman's rope deprived him of life.

If therefore, we covet the glory of the martyrdom of blood, let us not hesitate to undergo this unbloody martyrdom, "milder indeed," as St. Bernard says, "in the horror it excites, but more grievous by its duration." Such unbloody martyrdom is the religious life. It is a martyrdom to bear with daily patience, as long as life endures, what is irksome to nature. There is a martyrdom of poverty, of obedience, of chastity, and of religious discipline. Our martyrdom may be our abiding in the country, or in a small provincial town. It is often a martyrdom to be employed in lowly offices, to live in solitude, to be tied down to studies. Finally, we must see our martyrdom in the fulfilment of the promises we made, when admitted into the Society. Each of us was then asked, "whether he had made up his mind and was ready . . . to accept, and, with the grace of God, to bear patiently, the injuries, insults and contumely that are attached to the livery of Christ, and anything else whatsoever that might be inflicted on him, whether by one of the house or of the Society (in which he desires to obey and to be humiliated and to attain eternal bliss), or, outside of it, by any one whomsoever, not returning evil for evil, but good for evil unto all." (1)

With all these various trials in view, St. Ignatius exhorts us not merely to labor, but also to offer to God greater and nobler gifts ; and he sums up in these words all that is repugnant to human nature :—"having subdued the rebellion of the flesh, of the senses, of self-love and of the world." (2) The plan of action in this warfare he condenses in the famous formula of the Institute :—"whoever," he says, "wishes in our Society . . . to battle for

(1) *Examen Generale*, c. iv. n. 45. (2) *Exerc. Spir.*, *Contempl. de Christi Regno*.



God under the standard of the cross and to serve the Lord alone and the Roman Pontiff, His vicar on earth . . . must take care that first God and then the details of this Institute, which is the way to reach God, be ever present before his eyes."

The martyrdom, then, characteristic of our Society consists in combating under the standard of the cross; and in carrying on this warfare we must ever keep our eyes fixed on God, our Leader, and our hearts on the most holy will of God made known to us by our Institute. If ever before there was need of this, how much more so now! The followers of the world everywhere teach and impiously boast that man is born his own master; that whatever he wills is lawful; and that he is to be restrained by no law but that to which he himself has submitted. This doctrine is at variance with the precepts of the divine law, at variance with the counsels of Christ, and at variance with the laws that govern our Society.

Now we cannot prevent the Society from being infected by this poison, unless we go forth ourselves to meet our unbloody martyrdom. Hence, in the first place, if we are commanded to have God ever before our eyes, we are, by the same law, bound to turn our hearts away from whatever can withdraw or alienate us from Him. The scope of this religious warfare of ours is to perfect charity. But the method of perfecting charity requires—in the words of the angelic Doctor—that "not only what is contrary to charity be excluded from the affections of man, but likewise all that prevents *the affections of the heart from being wholly directed to God.*"<sup>(3)</sup> Our holy Father was well aware of this, and accordingly gave us a rule of greatest importance, the eighth of the Summary. In reading this rule I am moved to sorrow. I admire the wisdom of the rule, I esteem our legislator, I reverence and venerate him; but I grieve over our easy-going indulgence in the observance of it. This rule is taken from the Constitutions themselves, of which the General Examen is

<sup>(3)</sup> 2-2, q. 184. a. 2. c.

a part, both having the same author, St. Ignatius. It is, therefore, according to the Apostolic Constitutions, of the highest authority.

Now, this so weighty rule plainly commands us to leave father, mother, brothers and sisters and whatsoever else we had in the world ;<sup>(a)</sup> and lest any one should say that this law was not made for everybody, nor for all times or places, or assert that it has one application now, and another hereafter, one in the South and another in the North, it was promulgated by Christ our Lord. "And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold and shall possess life everlasting." <sup>(4)</sup> Can anything be promised us more excellent than this? A truly infinite Goodness bestows on us the hundred-fold on earth in heavenly delights, and fills us with the firmest hope of eternal beatitude. Saint Ignatius was persuaded that his sons would be men of great souls; and that there never would be a single one of Ours to set such little value on his peace and quiet of mind and the hope of those priceless goods, as not to think it worth his while to be at a great distance from his relatives and to be cut off from their society. He was persuaded that all, without exception, would be moved more by the divine promises than by a mother's love.

Now if we wish to see these promises realized, we must forsake not merely in body those with whom we were once intimate, but also in mind and will. For, how does it answer the purpose of the rule to be away from our relatives, if our heart forthwith wanders back to them; if what our eyes do not see is present to our mind and occupies our thoughts; if we find our pleasure and delight in the memory of what we have given up? As our holy Founder proposed divine rewards to souls of noble stamp, so against those of narrower build he cited the threat of our divine Saviour: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." <sup>(5)</sup>

(a) Exam. gen. c. iv. n. 7.

(4) St. Matth. xix. 29.

(5) St. Luke xiv. 26.

Between the love implanted by nature and this holy hatred prescribed by our divine Redeemer we may effect a righteous reconciliation, if, in the words of St. Gregory, "we love those who are bound to us by the ties of blood, so long as we know them to be truly friends; but hate them and fly from them, as if we knew them not, when they oppose us in the way of God." In like manner we harmonize the dictates of both laws, if, as St. Ignatius bids us, "we put off all carnal affection towards our kindred, converting the same into spiritual."

The nature of this spiritual affection, according to the formula of the Institute presented to Paul III., requires that each of us, with well-ordered charity, keep God first in view; for that love is well-ordered, which places God, the Creator, before all His creatures. And from this will necessarily follow the conclusion of our holy Father: "that he who is dead to the world and to self-love lives only to Christ our Lord, and has Him in place of parents, brothers, and all things whatsoever." Now, if we are dead to the world, we are not affected by the things of this life. He who is dead to the world is blind to the concerns of time, hears nothing of them, feels them not, is without bias in any direction, and is moved neither by the contumely of men nor by their praise. Family affairs, marriages, money matters are of no interest to him. But he is, because dead to the world, living, in the full sense of the word, and draws true life and breath from Him who is "the true God and life eternal."<sup>(6)</sup>

Such a life St. Ignatius lived. Dead to the world and to self-love, he lived, long before he wrote this rule, only to Christ our Lord. For, as Father Ribadeneira tells us, he had so crushed the promptings of flesh and blood and the love of kindred that, not unlike Melchisedech, king of Salem, he seemed to be "without father, without mother, without genealogy."<sup>(7)</sup> He never allowed himself to be entangled in the temporal concerns of his family, restricting himself to prayers to God for their welfare. Thus, on one occasion, when his grand-niece was about to marry,

<sup>(6)</sup> I. St. John v. 20.

<sup>(7)</sup> Hebr. vii. 3.



though his advice was asked by persons of distinction, he could not be induced to take the slightest interest in the matter. For, not deeming that such affairs entered within the scope of his vocation, he replied that he was "dead to the world, and was unwilling to return to things, to which he had bidden farewell as being foreign to his manner of life." It is well known too, that, whilst our holy Father was engaged in prayer, one winter, a bundle of letters was brought him from his native country, and that, immediately, without untying the bundle, he cast them into the fire; thus teaching the janitor who brought him the letters that one who had enlisted among the soldiers of heaven ought to ignore the affairs of earth. The more perfect among his children have followed his example.

The fact handed down to us about St. Francis Xavier is familiar to all, and is indisputable. About to start for India, he knew that he would never again see his mother on earth; and yet, although he would have needed to go but little out of his way, in order to bid her farewell, the apostle would not turn from his path, even at the entreaty of the ambassador of the king of Portugal, in whose suite he was. He preferred to console the Society rather than his mother; though such an example of virtue must have brought consolation to his mother also.

St. Francis Borgia, as history has it, was so accustomed to suppress all affection towards his kindred as to win the admiration of all, even of the emperor Charles V. and of the Sovereign Pontiff Pius IV.

Father Condigno Gonzalez Silveira refused to see his brother, who called on him at the college, rejected the presents offered him by his sisters, left to others the care of his sister's marriage, and never, except when forced by his superiors, wrote letters to his relatives or visited them—so truly had he transformed human love of relatives, based on feeling rather than on reason, into a more perfect charity. Verily, a brave soldier of Christ, and one who, by conquering the enemies in his own household, prepared for himself the martyr's palm; for the same Father, by his constancy amid the

most atrocious torments endured for the faith, brought everlasting glory to the Society.

Similar facts are told of Father Balthasar Alvarez ; and this, especially, that he never accepted anything from his parents, lest he should incur thereby the obligation of visiting them.

Father Anthony Pinas was so careful to blot out from his soul the memory of his kinsfolk, that, when a message of greeting was given him in his brother's name, he expressed surprise to hear that he was still living, and acknowledged that he had not yet opened a package of letters received three years before.

How many others are there celebrated in our annals, who set sail for India without any hope of ever again seeing their native land, and who, fearing lest the influence of relatives might interfere with their longed-for journey, had recourse to pious deceptions to elude them, and to depart secretly.

That the glory of God should be dearer to them than their relatives, was the lesson the Redeemer of mankind, when only twelve years of age, taught them by His own admirable example. He had chosen for Himself a Mother whose equal you shall never find, an Immaculate Virgin whom neither angels nor men shall ever sufficiently praise ; and a foster-father, worthy to be the guardian of such peerless innocence. Nevertheless, when there was question of the honor of His Heavenly Father, He remained in the house of God ; though He knew full well how bitter would be His parents' grief.

Our holy Father, St. Ignatius, used this incident as one most suited to teach us that, when Christ, our Lord, left His parents and betook Himself to the Temple, He gave the outline of evangelical perfection. For a life of perfection essentially implies freedom from the bonds of flesh and blood, in order that with untrammelled mind we may tend to God.

This teaching we gather also from the Old Testament. For, when the Lord wished to make Abram illustrious and pre-eminent

in the eyes of posterity, He said: "Go forth out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall show thee." <sup>(8)</sup>

The holy Patriarch obeyed. The future was hidden from him, yet he forsook what was certain for what was doubtful, what was present for what was future.

But his obedience was crowned with blessings far greater than he could have hoped for. "And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and magnify thy name, and thou shalt be blessed." <sup>(9)</sup> This he believed, and the event was the reward of his faith. For what nation can be called as great as that which gave birth to the Redeemer of mankind?

Another race, great in sanctity and learning, devoted to God and the Sovereign Pontiff, pre-eminent especially in lowliness of mind and obedience, free from all that savors of the world, ready for every humiliation, eager to suffer martyrdom — such a race St. Ignatius, with ardent and unceasing prayers and tears, suppliantly begged of the Lord, and obtained. He was persuaded that it could not be kept in the freshness and bloom of apostolic virtue, unless separated from flesh and blood. Impelled, therefore, by that divine love which fires holy men, and from them spreads even to the faint-hearted and listless, and by that fatherly affection wherewith he yearned to have us with him one day as saints in glory, he commanded each one of us to put off all carnal affection towards relatives, and he begged of God children dead to the world and to self-love. For the same reason he prescribed that we should lay aside even the useless remembrance of our relatives. And hence, should a question arise as to the distribution of our temporal goods—whether they shall be given to the poor or to relatives—he wished the candidates for the Society to be asked if they were ready to leave the whole matter to others, men of recognized sanctity and learning. <sup>(10)</sup> His reason was that, if we take this care upon ourselves, there is danger of our being swayed by ties of blood.

Now, if, in matters of importance, Ours are to keep them-

<sup>(8)</sup> Gen. xii. 1.

<sup>(9)</sup> Gen. xii. 2.

<sup>(10)</sup> Exam. Gen., c. 4. n. 2.



selves aloof from intercourse with their parents, with how much greater reason have our Fathers General forbidden journeys undertaken for the purpose of visiting relatives? In accordance, then, with their office, and in keeping with the mind of our holy Founder, the seventh General Congregation inserted in our Institute this ordination of Father Claudius Aquaviva: "Provincials must not, without permission of the General, permit Ours to visit their native place, except for urgent reasons and such as will not admit of delay. Should necessity compel them to grant this permission, at least they must afterwards inform the General, and signify to him for what length of time the permission was granted. Moreover, let them in all cases assign such companions as will be a cause of edification."<sup>(1)</sup>

Father Claudius was succeeded by Father Mutius Vitelleschi, who, led by the same love of the Society and a like solicitude, recalls the examples of our Fathers, whose days were passed in profound oblivion of the concerns of their previous life, having, as he says, lost all recollection of kindred, except in prayer for their salvation. "Now, as I fear," he adds, "that this affection may, under the guise of charity, gradually creep in amongst us, I adjure all, by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, to be fully persuaded that this may be a source of great calamity to the Society. Wherefore, as in duty bound, I enjoin superiors, with all the earnestness and strictness in my power,"—these are the words of Father Mutius, not mine—"to show themselves especially firm and unflinching on this point." Nay more, this same General commands superiors not to be moved in matters of this kind either by the importunities of relatives or the recommendations of persons of distinction.<sup>(2)</sup> The religious spirit of the man foresaw that "this might be the source of great calamity to the Society;" whether he thought rightly, or not, it is not for me to say: let others decide.

But some one may object that times are different now. Granted, indeed, that the times are changed; but let not that pristine

<sup>(1)</sup> Ord. Præp. Gen., c. 1. pro Prov., n. 4.

<sup>(2)</sup> Epist., 2 Jan., 1617.

strength and nobility of virtue be changed. Yes, let the times be different ; but surely God is ever the same. He who said to Abraham, "Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house," forbids us to make for ourselves a dwelling in our father's house, and to return to that which we vowed to leave. "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee," was the promise of God to Abraham ; and the self-same God made of the Society a great nation, and not only "multiplied the nation," but also "increased its joy ;" in that age especially, when it was particularly pre-eminent for the sanctity of its members ; when contempt for the perishable things of time, lowliness of spirit, modesty, obedience, and sobriety of speech flourished in full vigor ; when love of toil, and the pursuit of lasting aims, and solicitude for the spiritual welfare of the poor were conspicuous and were cherished by all ; when little value was set upon human ways and means, but God's ways were paramount ; when, more than at any other time, superiors were zealous for strict observance, conspicuous for their knowledge and love of our Constitutions and their fidelity in enforcing them, at the same time that they were fearless defenders of the observant, upholders of ancient customs, and stern reprovers of those who strayed.

That was the age when the Society numbered in its ranks men pre-eminent alike in virtue and learning—the age of saints, the age of martyrs. As long as the Society, in its loyalty, not to the standard of this world, but to the standard of the cross, glories in the cross of our Lord ; as long as it is dead to the world, casts aside all solicitude for the things of this life, divests itself of all love of flesh and blood and lives only to Christ our Lord : so long does God watch over it, shield it in the hour of trial, second its enterprises and heap upon it countless blessings. As long as, in obedience to the plan of the Institute laid before the Sovereign Pontiff, we are careful to keep God first in view, God will prosper our designs, and undertake the furthering of our interests and their defence.

But if ever, which God avert, what is transitory should be prized more than our rules ; if ever, through fear or through love of men or the desire of pleasing them, we should be led aside from the path of our holy Institute, we should be then a nation great perhaps in numbers ; but in worth and dignity we should dwindle into insignificance, the lustre of our name would be dimmed, and, most deplorable of all, the blessings of God would be ours no longer.

God grant that this calamity may never befall any portion of the Society.

Spiritual men are wont to ward off disasters such as these from the Society by prayer to God, by counsel and example before men. But spiritual men, we confess, are few ; and the causes of the scarcity we are unable to assign. Not the least cause, however, is dissipation of mind on exterior things, which weakens the interior man, paralyses him, and sometimes deprives him of life completely. Now, the dissipation of mind that springs from intercourse with relatives is manifold, and, by reason of its attractiveness, it is all the more pernicious. For great is the power of looks, conversations, terms of endearment, letters, gifts and caresses.

Our father's house brings back not only the recollection of those whom we met there, and with whom we lived familiarly, but seems even to set them before our very eyes—such a hold upon the memory have local associations. That from this source dangers spring, and injuries of no slight moment befall the Society, is beyond all doubt. This much is certain, that spiritual men are not the outcome of flesh and blood.

The Council of Trent, addressing prelates and others who hold ecclesiastical benefices, “admonishes them”—these are its words—“with all the earnestness it may, to lay aside entirely all human affection towards brothers, nephews, and other relatives ; for from this source spring many evils in the Church.”<sup>(13)</sup> Now, if this love of kindred is the nursery of many evils in the Church and

<sup>(13)</sup> Sess. 25, rf. c. 1.



among the clergy, how much more will it be so in a religious Order?

They who are under the sway of this excessive solicitude for relatives, are hurtful to their brethren by their example. For some are vexed at the sight of such irregularities, and others importune superiors to grant them a similar liberty of intercourse with their relatives. If leave to visit is denied them, they grieve thereat, and show their displeasure in loud complaints; if permission is given, they straightway set off post-haste for the paternal home. And, if this intercourse with relatives grows in frequency, it may be feared that what is done in the community becomes the gossip of the family circle—a thing most injurious to charity. Moreover, they who are allured by this love of kindred destroy in another way union of hearts and minds. For those accustomed to live on terms of familiarity with externs, and more especially with relatives, loosen, from want of intercourse, the ties of friendship that ought to bind them to their superiors and brethren. Hence, the danger arises that, as they slight their brethren, they take but little interest in the works of the Society. For, although they be constrained to remain at home, their thoughts and inclinations take wings and range abroad. They are thus of necessity less interested in what concerns us; and so things will come to such a pass that they will seem to be in the house of God and in the Society as strangers and aliens.

Besides, we not unfrequently see those whom this pernicious love of relatives infects turn aside from the path of perfection, and grow indolent in their practices of piety and union with God. Gradually they free themselves from the yoke of the rule, and fall away from the true spirit of the religious life. This grave misfortune befalls those especially who are accustomed to mix themselves up with family affairs. These with little scruple evade the authority of superiors, and are in bonds to their relations. They strive to help their relatives with the income of the sacred ministry, which, according to a decree of the Sovereign Pontiff, is to be used exclusively in supplying the wants of Ours. They are joined to the

Society in appearance only, and for the purpose of more successfully furthering the interests of their kindred. They make parade of the venerated name of members of the Society of Jesus, and think they can find shelter and favor under it, while, on the plea of our provinces being dispersed, they live out of our houses, bring disgrace on themselves and on the Society, and take such firm hold in foreign soil that it is almost, if not wholly, impossible to uproot them. The wants of their own province move such men little; and, forgetful of the benefits they themselves received from it, they think life was given them only to add to their family possessions. I say nothing of what they do against their vow of poverty, of their surreptitious letters, nor of their cunning and anxiety to deceive. The consideration of some similar cases made Saint Jerome exclaim: "Such affection is cruelty."<sup>(1)</sup> They are, indeed, cruel both to themselves and to the Society.

But even to their relatives this affection is cruelty. For it often encourages kinsfolk to idleness; the greed of gold is fed, and yet hunger for money is never satisfied. He who takes on him the care of his relations' business deserves ill of them. For, from the example of the religious they learn to seek more eagerly after temporal goods, or are strengthened in their previous inclinations; and thus receive aid in money to their great misfortune. The Council of Trent, moreover, forbids all ownership in religious persons. In the twenty-fifth session (can. 2), it says: "No regular may possess, or hold as his own, goods acquired by him in any manner whatever. Let them be handed over at once to the superior . . . . What he has for his use must be in keeping with his state of poverty, and comprise nothing superfluous . . . . If any one shall be found, or shall be proved, to have kept anything, contrary to this decree, let him be deprived for two years of active and passive voice." We infer from this that there is nothing which a religious man can give his relatives, without permission, unless he wish, to his own great detriment and theirs, and at the risk of his own

<sup>(1)</sup> Epist. 125, al. 4, n. 7, ad Rustic. Monach.

and of their eternal salvation, to make them possessors of another's goods.

Saint Jerome pertinently says : " How many a monk, while compassionating father and mother, has lost his own soul ;" <sup>(15)</sup> and St. Basil says : " Knowing, therefore, the unbearable evils that result from over-attachment to relatives, let us flee from cares undertaken in their behalf, as from a weapon of the demon." We try sometimes to screen ourselves, and to ward off censure, under the pretext that what the rule asks of us is a hard thing. But, tell me, was it pleasant for our martyrs to be hurried off to ignominious torments? Were the rack and torture agreeable to the senses? Did contempt, cruelty, and injuries flatter nature? Yet all this they bore magnanimously, that they might keep God's law and guard the promises they had made to Him.

It does not become us, who bear the name those martyrs bore, and are sharers in their glory, to refuse our share of work, and to shun whatever is difficult and laborious.

We have promised our allegiance to the Lord ; we must be faithful to it. God engages to give us a hundred-fold and life eternal ; and we have promised Him to fight under the standard of the cross, and to do faithfully what is prescribed in our Institute. To keep the compact, it is not enough to observe those rules only which call for little exertion, and scarcely offer a difficulty ; but, in the measure of our strength, and as far as we can, we must observe them all. Nor is the eighth rule of the Summary so difficult of observance, provided only that he whose relatives are too devoted to him, and too solicitous about him, induce them not to ask for what our rules forbid, and not to claim visits from him ; provided only he remember that he is a son of the Society, and make more account of the wishes of his superiors than of his relatives.

The spirit of our vocation clearly requires this ; and so, too, does the warfare in which we are engaged. It calls, above all things, for men — men of serious purpose, men born or trained to lofty undertakings, unflinching and great-minded in their contempt

<sup>(15)</sup> Reg. Monach. ex script. S. Hier., coll. Lupus de Olmeto, c. 18.



of comforts. It ill becomes a soldier to take his ease in the bosom of his family, to entertain nephews and nieces, while his fellow-soldiers are in the midst of the battle. It becomes that soldier least of all who is bound by his pledge and his promise to fight under the standard, not of the world, not of flesh and blood, not of the senses and self-love, but under the standard of the cross, under the command of the Eternal King, who, "having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God." <sup>(16)</sup>

In the same formula of our Institute of which I have spoken, each one has his duty in the service assigned to him. For thus our Father, Saint Ignatius, exhorts us: "Let each one keep ever before his mind the thought that he is a member of a Society instituted especially to seek the advancement of souls in Christian life and learning, and to propagate the faith by preaching to the people and explaining the word of God, by spiritual exercises and works of charity, and, in particular, by the instruction of the young and the ignorant in Christian doctrine, and by the administration of spiritual consolations to the faithful in the confessional."

Accordingly, we are commanded to abstain from frequent intercourse with relatives, in order that the Society may find us always ready and prepared to help men in securing their salvation. But lest we ourselves should imitate the manners, usages, and easy living of those whom we strive to help, and lest in the warfare with the senses and the love of the world, which inspires other men, we should contract some stain ourselves, the warning of our holy Founder ought to be deeply imprinted in our minds: "Let him have a care, first of all, to keep God ever before his eyes." To effect this more certainly and more securely, our holy Father prescribed for us what is to be done and the method of doing it. He imposes on us serious duties, laborious and enduring, many of them lowly ones, by which he would close the door against self-love and love of the world.

And, since he planned nothing but what was divine, and under-

<sup>(16)</sup> Heb. xii. 2.

took nothing but what was holy, he desired that our mode of action should be, so to say, divine; and expressed his wishes in that admirable phrase: "The more far reaching a good is, the more divine it is."<sup>(a)</sup> Now, in order that the good done by us may be far reaching, he decreed that attention should be given especially to those who, by their authority, high station, or learning, may more easily lead others to the worship of God and the reception of the sacraments. Whence it is manifest that we ought, first of all, to bestow our care, and that after no hurried fashion, upon the clergy.

Having established this, as a foundation, our holy Father goes on to unfold his plan: "In order that the superior may make a better and surer choice of the labors in which he employs his subjects, he should keep the same rule in view, namely, God's greater honor and the more far reaching good."<sup>(17)</sup> For this reason he teaches us to prefer spiritual things to those which pertain to the body; what is more urgent, to that which will safely admit of delay; what is the peculiar work of the Society, or what is not attended to by others, to what is foreign to the Society, and what is already cared for by others; what is less dangerous for him who is employed in it, to occupations which are exposed to peril; what is of profit to many, as preaching and teaching, to what benefits only a few, as hearing confessions; what is lasting, to what is of mere temporary advantage. These directions, transcribed almost verbatim from the Constitutions,<sup>(18)</sup> show the order to be observed, according to the mind of our holy Father, in the works of the sacred ministry.

And in the first place, spiritual works are to be regarded as of more importance than those which concern the body.

Then, attention must be given to those things—if there be any such—which admit of no delay. However, if these are not among the Society's own works, we ought not to engage in them longer than necessity requires. And this was St. Ignatius' own custom.

<sup>(a)</sup> Constit. p. vii. c. 2, D.

<sup>(17)</sup> Decl. E.

<sup>(18)</sup> Constit. p. vii. c. 2.

As soon as he had perfected any work, he used to withdraw from it himself, and commit the care of it to other fitting persons.

But, most of all, we must employ ourselves in the peculiar works of the Society ; amongst which these hold a place of chief importance : — colleges, missions and the teaching of Christian doctrine. Even impious men show us of what service our colleges are in fostering piety and correcting morals. They willingly permit us to engage in other ministries, if they can but hinder us from educating youth to the service of God. In prosecuting vigorously the work of our colleges, and bringing them to the desired standard of success, there is in the Society a zeal worthy of all praise. Superiors utilize all their resources ; they watch, and labor, and spare no effort. They choose subjects who may become fitted, according to legal requirements, for teaching publicly ; and these young men prepare themselves with great toil to pass examinations in letters. I declare publicly, in the name of the Society, my feelings of gratitude to these, my well beloved sons, and their superiors. I am not unacquainted with the anxieties of those who govern, and the trying labors of those engaged in teaching youth. I call to mind others also who have deserved well of the Society, by fulfilling the duty of teachers for more than twenty years. From the depth of my heart I congratulate them on the undying merit they have obtained before God.

If, on the other hand, there be any who find their life in the colleges a painful one, who impatiently await its completion, that they may fly to pleasant ministries, I ask them to examine diligently in what spirit they desire more agreeable occupations. Is it the glory of God, or an eagerness for their own ease and freedom, which impels them ?

Regarding missions I shall make this one remark :—The church of God is in the sorest straits. Whole peoples are ready to receive messengers of the Gospel. They ask not only for missionaries, but for colleges. In those missions which have fallen to us, there is the greatest dearth of laborers. Christ's faithful are dying, unable to obtain a priest who may strengthen and comfort



them in their last struggle. The Sovereign Pontiff, in his great and exceeding zeal to propagate the faith, has, time and again, offered missions to me, and asked for missionaries ; and, though mindful of the vow by which our professed are bound—the solemn vow of special obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff with regard to missions, —I have been compelled in sorrow to decline what was so kindly offered.

Of this vow, too, I informed the Holy Father, as our rules obliged me ; and, while intimating his previous knowledge of it, he expressed his pleasure that I should have made the declaration.

There are Fathers and Scholastics not a few, who ardently desire and ask for the missions ; and superiors are usually generous in sending whom they can. But there are so many houses in our provinces, so many occupations, so many plans unrealized, that it is difficult for those in charge to forego the assistance of even a few subjects. Nevertheless, that souls may not perish, I ask those on whom the decision rests, I entreat and conjure them, to see if a limit cannot be set to less useful ministries, that so we may carry aid to souls who are absolutely destitute of the spiritual resources with which Europe abounds. Nor can I forbear recalling what Rev. Father Roothaan wrote concerning the desire of foreign missions, <sup>(a)</sup> when, among other noble thoughts, after quoting the Gospel phrase : “ Give, and it shall be given to you,” he reminds us that our Lord does not say, “ give, when it shall have been given to you ;” but wishes us to be prepared to give out of our poverty, supported by the firm hope that what we shall so have given will be repaid to us with interest by the divine liberality.

It is, in a peculiar manner, the duty of the Society to instruct children and the ignorant in what pertains to the essentials of belief and the shaping of their conduct according to the divine law. Wherefore, the most important work of our colleges must be to make those, who come to us for a liberal education, clearly comprehend, assiduously and thoroughly learn, and earnestly investigate what they ought to believe, what they ought to do, and what helps

<sup>(a)</sup> Dec. 3, 1833.

they ought to use in order to gain life eternal. Let superiors be persuaded that this is a duty of the highest importance ; and let them intrust it to men who will imbue the impressionable minds of the young with piety and the wisdom of heaven. To understand the better all the importance of the matter, let them recall to mind the vow which both Professed and Spiritual Coadjutors take of *especial care* (according to obedience) *for the instruction of children*.

Hence, occasions of fulfilling this duty ought to be sought for, rather than avoided. We ought to take pity on the multitudes of children who are cast adrift in the streets of our cities ; who, neglected by parents, grow up in ignorance of the loving goodness and providence and justice of God ; who become familiar with vice and crime, and are utterly corrupted by evil example.

And, if any one imagine it unworthy of the Society to work among the lowly, and think that we are destined for higher ministries, that it becomes us to frequent palaces, and to run after persons of the upper classes only, let him remember that men of the greatest parts : — Ignatius, Francis Xavier, Lainez, Le Jay, Salmeron, Brouet, Faber, Canisius, and others of surpassing excellence, taught the precepts of faith and morals to children and to the poor and ignorant, in the hospitals and in the streets.

Let him remember, too, that the Wisdom of the Eternal Father descended to earth, in order to teach us, in the humility of our flesh, the precepts of eternal life ; and that God Himself, taking pity on the little ones, called them with a divine kindness to Him : — “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.” <sup>(19)</sup>

These words we read in Saint Mark ; but I own I do not know from what Gospel we can learn that the evangelical laborer is to deal solely with men of rank, or with the wealthy. As to members of the Society the matter is clear. The formula of the Institute commends to our charge one class of persons only—*children and the ignorant*—by name and repeatedly. These are its words : “In particular, they are to hold as commended to their care the instruc-

<sup>(19)</sup> Mark x. 14.

tion of children and the ignorant in christian doctrine . . . . It is very necessary that the superior and his consultors should employ great vigilance in providing for this. For, in our neighbor, the building of faith cannot be raised up without a foundation ; and among ourselves, there is danger that, as a man becomes more learned, he may, perhaps, strive to avoid this charge, as at first sight less brilliant ; though, in truth, there is none more fruitful either for our neighbor's edification or for the exercising by Ours of the twofold duty of charity and humility." These words determine sufficiently what really befits, and does honor to, a member of the Society.

And if St. Ignatius teaches us to devote special care to men who influence others by their authority, he does it because the good so done is more far reaching, not because it becomes a member of the Society to overlook that which seems to bring less distinction and renown. Let our most earnest endeavors, therefore, be centered in our colleges, missions, and the careful instruction of children and the ignorant in matters of faith and morals : since these are the special works of the Society.

Next in importance are those works, if there be any such, to which others cannot devote themselves. The Society, for this reason, has taken the charge of parishes, where there was not a sufficiency of other priests ; and also the care of nuns or "women living together in the same house, in fixed places, and under fixed laws."<sup>(20)</sup> For, although this charge has always been held most alien to the Institute and calling of the Society, yet, in foreign missions, where there are no other priests, it is very properly undertaken. It is true that the twelfth decree of the twentieth General Congregation permits us to visit convents of nuns or boarding schools for girls "*only* for the purpose of giving the spiritual exercises, or of acting as extraordinary confessors," and, therefore, only four or five times a year, when exhortations on spiritual matters may be also given. Nevertheless, we are not forbidden to do this oftener, where there is a want of other priests. For, when this is the case, the exception holds which was obtained by intercession from the

<sup>(20)</sup> Congr. vii. Decr. 56.



same Congregation, namely, that access may be permitted oftener, "when the state of affairs is such that Ours *cannot* avoid more frequent visits to the said monasteries and academies."

Our holy Father goes on, further, to advise that of equally necessary works those be preferred which are safest for the persons engaged in them. What these occupations are, the weakness of our human nature and experience itself—too often, a sad experience—sufficiently define.

Led by the same consideration of a more far reaching good, our holy Founder attached greater importance to sermons and lectures than to hearing confessions; "because," as he says, "they bring help to a larger number." For the same reason he aimed at what was lasting and permanently beneficial; in which he himself gave us an example, by establishing the German College and other colleges and missions. Others of our Fathers have imitated this example, by building churches in foreign missions; others, again, by founding schools; and the Society itself has established pious Sodalties of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, and of the Bona Mors, and has joyfully and unceasingly labored to spread devotion to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Conception of the most Blessed Virgin Mary.

If we follow these precepts of our Father, occasions of abnegation and of martyrdom will not be wanting. We shall have to attempt much that is difficult, to forego, or even put away from us, much that is pleasant. But great advantages will result thence for the glory of God. Our work will be acceptable to God; and Saint Ignatius, "the lawgiver, will give a blessing." <sup>(21)</sup>

For, in the first place, method will reign in the transaction of all our affairs, and a plan and purpose in our every action. We shall clearly discern what is of greatest necessity in each place where we are occupied, what are the evils, how they may be remedied, what aids we are to rely on, who are the persons that may best help us in the prosecution of our designs. For it sometimes happens that things are carried on aimlessly, that nothing is determined,

(21) Ps. 83. 8.

nothing settled, our only intent being to give our ministrations to those who ask. We do not act ourselves; rather we are acted upon. We are either induced or driven to take occupations that are of little utility, and are sometimes quite out of keeping with our manner of life. And hence, Ours expend great labor often and reap little fruit; for scarcely anything worthy of the Society is accomplished, and, after many years spent in a city, scarcely any reformation of manners is perceptible, except among a few, who would practise piety without us. If, on the other hand, method is observed, our ministrations are wondrously furthered; Ours grow better fitted for their work, and, by degrees, are formed for higher undertakings. They uphold the reputation of the Society, they create a longing for our ministrations, and, what is of the first importance, they seek the glory of God, not their own, and are stirred up to do holy deeds holily.

For a halo of virtue and holiness ought to encircle all our actions. And we gain a reputation for this among men by that religious gravity and carriage, the outward appearance and likeness of which is shown us in the Rules of Modesty. This modesty is the manifestation of a soul united to God, and, in a wonderful manner, wins respect for a religious man. It is based on the things that are "interior, from which force and efficacy must flow to the exterior;" and to which St. Ignatius attached the greatest efficacy, greater, certainly, than to human helps or natural endowments. In the last part of the Constitutions he explains this in the gravest terms: "In order to preserve not only the body . . . but also the spirit of the Society, and to gain the end it proposes to itself, which is the helping of souls to attain their last and supernatural end, those means which unite the instrument to God and dispose it to receive direction from His divine hand are more efficacious than those which fit it for intercourse with men." (22)

The work we are engaged in is no mere human work. Men's salvation is at stake—their eternal salvation, which must be procured by means divinely instituted. The word we preach is divine,

(22) Const., P. I, n. 2.

the Sacraments are divine ; " For Christ we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us. For Christ, we beseech you, be reconciled to God." <sup>(23)</sup> Our duty is to be ambassadors. Through us God is moving, drawing, and rousing men. Through us Christ is entreating and encouraging men to repentance. What does all this show, but the supreme necessity of intimate union with God? Let, therefore, the maxim of St. Ignatius be rooted in our minds, let it ring always in our ears, and be engraved upon our hearts : Each one of us should be so closely united to God that we may serve as instruments under the guidance of His divine hand. And, in truth, the Gospel laborer's chief concern ought to be this sweet, familiar intercourse with God, which cheers the soul and strengthens it. If we make this union with God such that we may be said to live in it, all life becomes more pleasant and joyous ; nothing can happen to us amiss, nothing disturb our peace of soul, nor hinder us from fighting bravely the battles of the Lord.

True it is, indeed, that we must deal with men also ; but we are to see to it, as our holy Father taught us, that we help them " in reaching their last and supernatural end ;" and for this we must use the methods and means recommended by our rules, not those which are forbidden. They, therefore, are gone astray who pour themselves wholly out upon external things ; who cannot stay at home, unless it be in a parlor ; who seem to be at home only when they are in the streets, or in the homes of worldlings, to be at rest only when wandering hither and thither, and rushing to and fro ; who imagine that they then only gain the reputation of apostolic men, when they drift about in a career as varied as it is aimless. The martyrdom of such men is mild, indeed ; and the injury done their spiritual life is boundless.

Oh ! that those who feel themselves too much drawn to external things, would think of the advice given us in the " Instruction for the Increase and Preservation of the interior Spirit in the Society," and then weigh it well, and ponder over it. In Chap. 1, no. 4, on the " Sources of evils," we read as follows : " There is another most

<sup>(23)</sup> II. Cor. v. 20.



baneful source of evils, the more hurtful because commonly thought to be less injurious, the being taken up, that is, with external things, to which some give themselves over entirely. For there are some, naturally disinclined to recollection, who not only seize eagerly all occasions presented them of engaging in labor, but seek them of their own accord, and, in one way or another, originate and multiply them. Some, because of the poverty of the community . . . others, under pretext of their neighbor's salvation, entangle themselves in endless visits . . . Others, again, under the more religious pretext of assisting their neighbor in the ordinary duties of the ministry, give their attention to a few pious women and find less fruit therein than occupation. So much so, that it is clearly necessary to apply some efficacious remedy to this evil, since inordinate occupations of this kind not only waste our time, but darken the mind as well, and harden the heart."

Twelve years ago, our venerated Father Beckx of pious memory wrote in the same sense to the Society. I quote his very words: "Surely, if any one of the Society were to imagine that he had done his duty, as Rev. Fr. Mutius was wont to say, by lending an ear to some thirty pious women; or if any one, careering to and fro, were to engage solely or mainly in directing and exhorting communities of nuns and school girls, would it not be the occasion to say, with St. Francis Xavier, that he had taken on him a work of scanty profit, and of the greatest danger? or, at least, that in such works *much time is lost* and very little sure and solid fruit is gathered?" (24)

Certainly, such works offer favorable opportunities for abandoning one's self wholly to external occupations, opportunities that are exceedingly injurious to religious life, and equally destructive of solid learning.

It is no common and ordinary learning that the Society requires of its members; as those decrees of General Congregations warn us, which have been passed regarding such as are examined for profession. Father Centurione's words concerning the Professed

(24) Ep. 10 Dec., 1875, n. 19.

of four vows are deserving of mention : " No one," he writes, " is to take the four solemn vows, who has not given, during a long time, striking proof as well of remarkable innocence of life as of the highest learning." <sup>(25)</sup>

Neither must I omit the warning which the fourth Instruction gives us in these words : " It were well that our priests found a little more pleasure in study." <sup>(26)</sup> And if we look for the cause of this languor in the pursuit of knowledge, we shall find it in the deplorably trivial nature of the occupations I have just mentioned. For these withdraw the mind from learning, and stifle the desire for knowledge, to the injury and shame of the Society. Men are accustomed to expect much from Ours, and to build great hopes upon us ; to disappoint them is to ruin our reputation. And hence those are utterly in error who think we can fulfil our ministry, without earnest labor in study—an error that must undoubtedly be corrected. For in our days, outside of the Society, there are brilliant intellects trained to excel in learning ; and there are men renowned for their rare scientific attainments, whom it is most difficult to contend against.

Let our preachers be convinced of this ; and let them not shun the labor of study and composition. It will be the duty of superiors to give them time and leisure, and to see that they utilize them, withdrawing them from all occupations which are trivial or foreign to our Institute, cutting off intercourse with externs, ceremonious correspondence, interviews and conversations. For our gravest interests are here at stake ; since the preachers of God's word will either greatly enhance or greatly injure the reputation of the Society.

Of such importance did this solicitude for the word of God appear, that the seventh Congregation, in its 80th decree, ordered these words to be added to the Provincial's 52nd rule : " To those also who have a talent for preaching must be given two years, or at least one, for the private study of Holy Scripture, for the reading of the Fathers, and for meditation on divine things." It is

<sup>(25)</sup> Epist. ad Provinciales V. id. Sextil., 1756. <sup>(26)</sup> Ad occup. var., n. 2.

the duty of the sacred orator to announce to the Christian people the Word which God has spoken, and to explain it according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers. Now, to do this in a becoming manner, we must endeavor, by prayer and meditation, to be so moved and affected ourselves by what we have to say, that our words will reach our hearers full of the fire of devotion.

But the very greatest care must be taken that we do not deal from the pulpit with profane matters. For this ill becomes the sacred orator ; nor is it even consistent with reason, especially in our day, when men are so ignorant of divine things. Instruction is required in our time, especially by men, who may, perhaps, be very learned in other matters, but are almost or entirely ignorant of the means by which they are to secure their eternal salvation. And if this be attended to, the preacher will be guarded also from treating subjects which the greater part of his audience know and understand better than himself.

And, since I am speaking of the all important duty of preachers, I cannot but speak about confessors also, and repeat the weighty words of Father Aloysius Centurione : " Unskilfulness in moral theology," he says, " is disgraceful in a member of the Society, not only on account of the end proposed to him, but also on account of the special injury which it would do to all men of every class and station. And the injury is not merely *negative*, in so far as he is unfit to assist his neighbor, but *positive* ; for all priests are liable to be called upon to hear confessions ; and, if they are without the necessary knowledge, they expose themselves to the danger of erring, and will easily lead astray those who have recourse to them for assistance towards salvation. It is like the blind leading the blind ; both will fall into the ditch. " (27)

And this will suffice concerning the solidity of our doctrine, and its excellence. I have written much, if I consider the narrow limits of a letter, and your exceeding good will, most dear Fathers, and yet very little in comparison with the weight and importance of the subject.

(27) Ad occup. var., n. 2.



Some few things remain to be suggested concerning obedience and union of souls, which impart a wondrous power and efficacy to what we undertake for the glory of God. For if, during our whole life, we set before ourselves the will and judgment of our superior, as the rule of our own will and judgment; if, at the mere sign of his will, we show ourselves ready to obey; if love is our motive for prompt obedience; if, finally, we keep nothing hidden from our superior,—we shall then comply with our holy Founder's wish, and the Lord will bountifully aid us, and crown our efforts with entire success. Furthermore, it is plain and evident that we cannot observe that order and method in our occupations, of which I have spoken, nor contrive and direct our endeavors towards one and the same object, unless we all yield obedience to one will, and carry out its commands. Wherefore, no one ought to choose for himself peculiar and special occupations, nor must he urge or press those in authority to assign such to him; for these occupations often hinder good which is more universal and more divine; and the unity of action, so necessary for us, is thereby destroyed.

In the same sense Reverend Father Beekx wrote, some twelve years ago, as follows: "Shall we not say that he is deceived by the semblance of zeal, who, in the midst of such danger to faith and morals, and such loss of immortal souls, cares for nothing but the spread of some new devotion, or whose one great effort is to establish some new kind of confraternity, that will bring him the name and fame of a Founder? Great care must be taken, lest there creep into our Society that craving for novelty, which is so characteristic of the times that it often infects even the most sacred things."<sup>(28)</sup>

Then he enumerates the things on which Ours are mainly to expend their activity and labors. They are: "Catechetical instructions, plain practical sermons in country churches, the Spiritual Exercises, sodalities of the Blessed Virgin, particularly for men and youths, and the devotion of the Bona Mors.

<sup>(28)</sup> Ad occup. var., n. 23.

For it is well known that these founders of new associations, partly from their reputé as founders, and partly from the nature of the associations themselves, are in danger of setting aside obedience, domestic discipline and the rules ; nay, even, when money flows in upon them, they endeavor to make superiors subservient and obsequious to them. And they do often contrive to make their position so secure that they need fear no change of either place or employment. Then, they may safely shun irksome labors, to devote themselves to others which they find more pleasurable.

This mode of life, these liberties, these favors and privileges cannot but be a source of inquietude to others :—to men of sound and upright principles, because they fear for the well-being of the Society ; to others of looser opinions, because they covet for themselves a like immunity from restraint. Hence minds at variance, wills out of harmony, and no effort at mutual assistance. You would be led to think that various directors of souls had come together into one house, each devoted to his own little congregation, and only lightly held by that bond of fraternal charity through which they might “better and more effectually apply themselves to the service of God and the help of their neighbor.”<sup>(29)</sup> These words of the rule sufficiently indicate, that if, as St. Ignatius counsels us, the glory of God be our first and constant care, our strength and power must lie in union of minds and endeavors. This he himself declares still more clearly in the eighth part of the Constitutions ;<sup>(30)</sup> where he asserts that the chief bond which unites us to one another and to superiors is the love of God and of Christ Jesus our Lord. “And if superiors and inferiors,” he says, “are in union with the highest good, the divine Goodness, they will very easily be in union with one another ; and this shall be effected through that same love which, descending from God, will reach unto all mankind, and, in an especial manner, unto the body of the Society.” In this same place, after he had said that all goodness, virtue, and contempt of human things are

<sup>(29)</sup> *Summ. Reg.* 42.

<sup>(30)</sup> *c.* 1, n. 8.

aids to fraternal union, he does not hesitate to declare that self-love is the greatest enemy both of it and of every far reaching good. For self-love, of its very nature, is ever on the watch to gain private and selfish ends ; it prizes individual good, and looks with disfavor on what is lofty and far reaching. The slaves of this distorted love conceive only paltry and petty thoughts, and aim at trifles only ; their littleness of heart gives no room for nobler aspirations. It is a sad and a lamentable state in which to see one of the Society ; but it would be sadder still, if, while engaged in trifles, he should fancy he was working wonders.

This self-love, therefore, we must resist, with generous and unceasing endeavor. It is the promoter of idle and divided efforts : the gravest enemy of wide-spread good ; itself, not seldom, mere sensual love. And, since what we do must be done in order, in holiness, under obedience, solidly, with united hearts and powers, we must carry on this conflict, so like to martyrdom, lest the bonds of charity be loosened, and obedience weakened, and our fame for learning—not the counterfeit and fiction, but the reality—be overthrown ; and—what is the chiefest thing of all—lest order itself and holiness, which ought to govern all our actions, and be manifest in them, suffer grievous injury.

We shall escape these grave evils, if, obedient to our holy Father, and faithful to his precepts, we take care to have God, our Guide and Master, first and always before our eyes. But in order to escape them according to the way and method which befit our laws, and to show in our lives the virtue and perfection peculiar to the Society, we must put in practice another point which the formula of the Institute prescribes. For the formula couples the Institute with the service of God, when it warns each of us : "Let him take care to keep God first before his eyes, and then this Institute, which is a way to God."

To reach God is, indeed, the scope of our Institute—that holy law, whose author, says Paul III., was inspired by the Holy Spirit ; in which, according to the testimony of Julius III., nothing can be found which is not pious and holy ; the observance of which Pius



IV. pronounced to be the imitation of Christ, the Lord ; which, according to the declaration of Saint Pius V., gave birth to men conspicuous for learning, for exemplary life, and saintliness of character ; which Gregory XIII. proclaimed to be the ground-work of that system of defence devoted to the Catholic religion by the Society of Jesus ; and which brought forth an offspring ready to undergo every danger for the Church.

Other Pontiffs have bestowed other encomiums on the Institute ; and Clement XIII. testifies that it received the praise of nineteen of Christ's Vicars.

But it should be motive sufficient for us to observe our rules that they are the precepts of our holy Father St. Ignatius, and of our mother the Society, and that we have pledged our faith that we would be constant and obedient to these laws. Gladly then shall we comply with the admonition of the Holy Ghost : " My son, keep the commandments of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." <sup>(31)</sup> That we may never forsake this law of our mother, we must reflect upon it often, and engrave it deeply in our souls. For we cannot fittingly rest satisfied with the knowledge of the Institute acquired during our probations. Since it teaches us to live in accordance with our vocation, our chief care should be the study and thorough knowledge of this law. Superiors ought at least to give to it the time assigned for consideration ; and others such hours of leisure as freedom from preaching or other duties will permit. Most of us find time for reading journals and the daily papers, in which there is, generally, much that is worthless and false. How much more then should we find some little time for recalling to mind what contains the plan of all our life.

It is, however, to be studied with great reverence : for it discloses to us the most holy will of God, and presents us with lessons of heavenly wisdom, procured by our holy Father, Saint Ignatius, at the price of many prayers, and tears, and of much penance. Besides, it gave birth to the Society and fostered it, and ought, therefore, to be dearer to us than life itself.

<sup>(31)</sup> Prov. vi. 20.

It should be studied, therefore, without preconceived opinions, which would not only turn us from the true and genuine interpretation of our rules, but also most hurtfully prevent our apprehending rightly and fulfilling perfectly the divine will.

The Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory XIII., teaches us how we are to explain our Institute. He grants to all the right "of such interpretation as the words allow;" but, at the same time admonishes us, that, "if any doubt should arise concerning them (the Institute or Constitutions), it is to be referred to the Apostolic See or to the General of the Society, or to those to whom the General shall have assigned this duty."<sup>(32)</sup> Our judgments, then, about the Institute are to be formed according to this rule given by the Sovereign Pontiff; and no effort is to be expended on interpretations which are unsupported by any law.

Such an interpretation would be one which appeals to the practice of men grown old in the Society. Even though it might be of some value in explaining the Institute, those prove nothing whatever, who use it against the Institute. For, if age be any argument in this matter, they are refuted by the example of the most aged. No one, surely, was an older member of the Society than Saint Ignatius and his first companions. Our elders are to be respected for their authority, not because of their age only, but because they also earnestly cherish the Institute of the Society. Some, again, appeal to custom, against the rule; and rightfully, if the custom be approved. But their appeal is badly taken, if the custom be not sanctioned. We must always avoid paying too much deference to custom, and seeming to rely rather on precedent and usage than on the rule itself. Beyond doubt, then, an exceeding great esteem of the Institute ought to exist amongst us, an eager desire to know it thoroughly, and an ardent love of our rules. If this love be pure and genuine, great resolution will spring from it for the courageous execution of the things enjoined us. But on this resolution, on this strength of will, everything depends.

Wherefore, the *Instruction to Superiors*, which is the first amongst

<sup>(32)</sup> Ascendente Domino.

those in the book of the Institute, tells us : "Every effort must be made, not to establish new regulations, but to carry into execution those already established." The same Instruction reminds us "that all other defects have their sole origin in defective execution."

The sixth General Congregation fully understood this, and, in its thirty-sixth decree, ordained that "superiors with their consultors should, at each ordinary consultation, read together something from the rules, ordinations and instructions;" that "each month the memorial left by the Provincial or Visitor should be read in consultation;" that "once a month, for instance the first week of the month, instead of the usual consultation there should be had a consultation *de executione*;" that "those whose duty it is to write to the General and Provincial at stated times, should give special and clear information on this head." The same is to be done by the Provincial and his consultors, "at the beginning of each month. And on this subject (whether namely these consultations were held, and with what fruit . . . ) the consultors of the Provincial should, at the proper times, write to the General."

One whole Instruction, the nineteenth, is devoted to this matter of execution.

The same sixth Congregation further adds : "It will help very much, if all superiors combine with the General, and local superiors with the Provincial, to insist on execution, so that all shall understand that there is but one and the same mind throughout the whole Society . . . . In like manner, the superior of each college should combine with his consultors, with the admonitor, spiritual Father, and other Fathers who can help on execution, so that all may think and speak alike. And should any of the older religious be known to speak against execution, they are to be warned, and restrained, if need be, even by public penances, lest they disquiet others and render this execution difficult."

Such are the wise decrees of the General Congregations of the Society ; and, wherever they are observed, there we see a holy fellowship of soul, mutual love, order, a certain heavenly peace,



which are the fruits of self-denial, of struggle against selfish and worldly love, and of the bloodless martyrdom, which the Society most rightfully demands of us. Some, indeed, of these regulations will seem severe ; but it is only to those, if any such there be, who have adopted false opinions, are become impatient of religious discipline, and aim at liberty to indulge their appetite for pleasure. Eager lovers of liberty strive to cast off the yoke of obedience, submit unwillingly, and question each command. These, and no others, hinder mild and paternal government, because they will not submit to rule, but want all things done in the way they judge best themselves. This is the evil of our times, to claim liberty of thought, of judgment, of speech, of action ; to deem authority an enemy, and not only to set up limits to it, but to render it submissive and compliant, forcing it to do the pleasure of agitators, instead of allowing it to safeguard justice and lawful ordinances.

And, since our lot is cast amidst these troublous times, we must beware of contracting even the slightest taint of liberal opinions ; and against this pestilential evil superiors must seek a remedy in the Institute itself, and according to the method prescribed by the sixth General Congregation, in these words : " Vigor of discipline will further execution ; as will also the use of reprehensions, and other penances inflicted on all who transgress the rules, and heed not paternal admonitions—observing, however, the order laid down in the Rector's twenty-seventh rule. And all subjects must understand that, when other means shall have been found unavailing, the extreme remedy of dismissal will be applied, if necessary."

Love of the Society and a deep concern for all who would live in it religiously, according to the standard of our rules, impelled the Fathers of the sixth Congregation to fulfil so earnestly and so solemnly the duty imposed on them by the provinces. But we too have our duty ; and it is to assist those Fathers and our superiors in their zeal for the maintenance of the rule. We must keep our pledge to comply with the laws of the Society. Now, they fail to keep that pledge who pay little heed to discipline ; they fail more

grievously, who will not obey the superior when he upholds the rule ; those fail most of all, who oppose and denounce him and strive to mislead others into their own sentiments, and to hinder, with such aid, the restoration or maintenance of rules which restrict liberty, are opposed to sensuality, and are hateful to love of self and of the world. Such men inflict deadly wounds on the Society, and, so far as they can, unscrupulously break down the vigor of religious discipline.

Let us at least, Reverend Fathers and dearest Brothers in Christ, accept with one mind, one heart, and united strength, as an authentic proof and message of the divine will, all that the Sovereign Pontiffs, our Father Ignatius, the General Congregations, and the Generals of the Society have decreed and ordered. Let us, with love and obedience, perform, and help superiors to maintain, all that becomes religious men : and so we shall share one day the merits, grace and glory, which those of our superiors acquire, who endeavor to fulfil every duty of their office with great fidelity, constancy and charity.

For we should regard our Institute as a sacred deposit, entrusted to our guardianship for our own advancement in holiness and for the salvation of our neighbor. We must preserve it unimpaired, and maintain it undiminished. This is the meaning of our rules ; this is what they aim at ; the Popes themselves have made this manifest. Gregory XIII. declares it in these very words : “ After the example of other Roman Pontiffs, we must by Apostolic authority, preserve the Institute (of the Society) *unchanged and immovable* ; for it is the basis of the defence, which the sons of the Society afford the Catholic Religion.” <sup>(33)</sup> And Paul V. did not hesitate to say : “ Knowing, then, for certain that the whole welfare and progress of this religious order, which we can never praise sufficiently, depends on the observance of its Institute and of the decrees ordained by its General Congregations, We, by Apostolic authority, approve for all time the praiseworthy Constitutions . . .

(33) *Ascendente Domino.*

decrees, statutes and ordinances of the said Society.”<sup>(34)</sup> These same words Alexander VII. repeats; and he relates a saying of Paul V., which I shall quote in his own words: “The aforesaid and all other decrees whatsoever, and all statutes and ordinances appointed by General Congregations, which concern the Institute, the Society itself, and its manner of government, he (Pope Paul V.) confirmed; and he exhorted and warned the General and other superiors of the said Society to watch carefully over the observance of such decrees.”<sup>(35)</sup> And all this has been again confirmed, secured by Apostolic authority, and conceded to us, through the singular kindness and favor of our most holy Lord Pope Leo XIII.<sup>(a)</sup>

Let, then, these utterances and the words: “*unchanged and immovable Institute*,” on which the Society rests, let these utterances from the chair of truth resound in our ears, and make us mindful of our duty; let them strike fear and trembling into seekers after novelty, should any such arise.

Now, if we are commanded to hold fast, with a holy tenacity, all that concerns the Institute, it is evident we must maintain not only what is easy to nature, but also what is hard and painful. There is no martyrdom without suffering. And hence, we must, as far as possible, do every single bidding of the rule. For we have the same reason for attending to the least things as to the greatest—God’s most holy will. Add to this the will of the Society, whose General Congregations enact laws for all, and prescribe that laws which have been overlooked or have fallen into disuse are to be put in force anew, and established firmly. This has been enacted for the best of reasons, in order that all the rules may be observed, and observed by all. For, unless the same manner of carrying out our rules prevail everywhere, both as regards what we may do and what we may leave undone, some superiors will have most serious difficulties to contend against.

For it happens, sometimes, where religious discipline is in vigor, that the freer sort of persons think themselves hardly dealt with. Superiors, they imagine, are neither large minded nor tolerant

<sup>(34)</sup> Quantum Religio S. J.    <sup>(35)</sup> Debitum Pastoralis Officii.    <sup>(a)</sup> Dolemus.



enough to bear patiently with infringements of the rule. They would have them shut their eyes to evils that are spreading or impending ; and, since they will not do so, they proclaim such superiors to be of narrow hearts and petty understandings.

Of course I do not deny that our evil times prevent us occasionally from observing some points of the rule. But there are certain great principles of religious life which the very evils of the time commend, and press upon us. They recommend less travelling, less frequent visits of mere ceremony, fewer letters, especially to women ; they recommend, above all, the rule of having a companion, and more prudence in every detail of conduct ; lest they who hate us may detect what they may justly blame. And, further, there are many things in which no hindrance is set us, such as enclosure, obedience, charity and holy poverty. Besides, trying times are a wonderful help to devotion, to union with God and to contempt of earthly things.

And, for the rest, we must not yield to the wrongs and evils of our time. The fiercer the enemy's onset, the more valiantly must a soldier fight ; nor must he wait until the enemy's fury shall have abated, and then make ready to defend the stronghold, when it has been already captured. In like manner we must now guard more stout-heartedly the bulwarks of religious life. Now that hell's hostile powers press on more fiercely, we must fight, as they say, for our altars and our hearths, and, in a cause so holy, strain every nerve and muscle. It is less dangerous to defend a stronghold, than to recover it when lost.

Wherefore, it would be ill advised to put off our solicitude for the rule until better times, and meanwhile look idly on, while our persecutors despoil our household of the chief ornaments of religious life and of its brightest virtues.

We should, moreover, while observing all our rules, give special heed to those which define the particular duties of each. In this matter they are entirely mistaken who consider the occupations of the sacred ministry so peculiarly the work of the Society, as to subordinate all else to them, even the fulfilment of the special duty

assigned them by superiors ; and those, too, act wrongly and faithlessly, who take advantage of their office to busy themselves more freely in such occupations because they gratify their taste.

For the Lord asks nothing of us more earnestly than a fervent, entire, and faithful fulfilment of our appointed charge. Hence, whatever we do in the fulfilment of the duty appointed for us by superiors, we do by God's express will ; whatever time we steal from duty, we steal at the devil's instigation.

And, among the different duties which may fall to one and the same person, those should hold first rank, which regard such as are united with us by the bond of a common life, whom we rightly call our sons or brothers. "If any one," writes St. John Chrysostom, "would commend himself to Christ, let him guard the sheep . . . . let him look to the salvation of his brethren." And who are more justly styled our brethren than men whom the same holy fellowship, the same divine love, the same obedience bind and fasten unto us? "For no duty," the saint goes on to say, "is dearer to God than this . . . . Nor, is there anything which proves so clearly who is a faithful lover of Christ, as care of one's brethren and solicitude for their salvation." Now, first of all, superiors must show this solicitude ; ministers, professors, masters, and procurators must show it, and spiritual Fathers most of all. It were blameworthy, to speak mildly, if those whose duty it is to care for Ours, their brethren, the servants of Christ our Lord, and God's friends, were not at home to them, not easy of access, not ready enough to come to their assistance. There are in the Society superiors, professors and others, who devote all their zeal and labors to their subjects and brethren. They are not self-seekers ; but give to God all the toil and labor of every day. I esteem highly—venerate even, those who deserve so well of the Society, who are so pleasing to God, so dear to our saints ; and I pray God to bestow on them His choicest favors.

In saying that *every* precept of the Institute is to be observed, I am reminded of what grave men, out of solicitude for the Society, have more than once made known to me, concerning the obser-

vance of poverty, obedience, and fraternal charity. Many of the letters sent me state that attention should be called to these most important virtues.

Our holy Founder made poverty our bulwark against the revolt of sense and love of the world. Moved by the example of God our Saviour, Who, for our sake, "from rich, became poor,"<sup>(36)</sup> he wished it to be maintained inviolate; and he ordered that the Professed should vow never to consent to, or bring about, any change in the rules of poverty, unless, for just reasons, to make them more stringent. Now, one of these rules is that the food, the clothing, and the lodging be such as become poor men, and that we undergo at times some of the effects of poverty.

Let this be borne in mind by those, above all, who seem over eager to make needless journeys, especially if they be Professed. Such journeys are not effects of poverty, nor are they fitting relaxation for poor men. Some, no doubt, believe themselves blameless, because they obtain money for these journeys from friends. But no one may accept such money for himself; it must go to the superior; nor should the superior, merely because the money is at hand, give leave to travel.

I have it both from rumor and report that benefactors have been surprised at expenses incurred by some of Ours, which the very benefactors would consider extravagant in themselves. It is certain, at any rate, that journeys, made without grave reason, furnish no pattern of virtue. They are contrary to religious poverty, and wholly inconsistent with perfection. "Religious," St. Thomas says, "have bound themselves by vow to abstain from those things of the world, *which they might lawfully have used.*"<sup>(37)</sup>

Perhaps it was for the sake of poverty also that Reverend Father Beckx wrote, on February 5, 1860: "I notice . . . a growing custom, which I certainly wish wholly done away with—the custom of Ours going to travel with scholars." This he forbids in the following words: "I have thought it proper to forbid, and I do hereby forbid, Provincials to give Ours leave for such journeys, unless for

<sup>(36)</sup> II. Cor. viii. 9.

<sup>(37)</sup> 2-2, q. 184, a. 5. c.



very serious reasons, but never with permission to wear secular dress."

In the same letter he reminds us that our dwellings should be in keeping with poverty and religious simplicity, "by no means costly and over beautiful;" justly adding that it is a grievous error to suppose that the Society can win esteem by vulgar display and outward splendor.

For our fame must not be drawn from our dwellings; but fame for virtue must enter with us into them. It would be sad, indeed, if we who are believed to have given up the world, should appear eager now to bring it into the very house of God. It was said of Curius, who triumphed over the Samnites, the Sabines and Pyrrhus, that his house had no adornment, no embellishment, save himself. With greater reason ought it to be said of us that our glory is from ourselves, not from our houses and their furniture.

Another point, in which complaint seems grounded, concerns obedience. The evil condition of the times has compelled many to live almost alone; and some appear anxious to retain the liberty of living as they choose; they are impatient of the restraints of obedience, eager to escape from the control of authority. Now, in forsaking obedience, we blot out the characteristic mark by which God, the angels, and even men distinguish the members of the Society of the Son of God, Who became obedient even to the death and ignominy of the cross. They who withdraw themselves from obedience give unmistakable proof that they are not sons of St. Ignatius; for no virtue receives so much commendation from our holy Father as this. To be brief, I quote only from the sixth part of the Constitutions. "Let us" he says, "use every effort in our power to acquire this virtue, obeying with great exactness the Sovereign Pontiff, in the first place, and then the superiors of the Society; so that, in everything which can rightfully fall within the province of obedience, we may be most ready at its bidding, just as if it were the bidding of Christ our Lord."<sup>(38)</sup> We should ponder these words. Our holy Father speaks earnestly, and, by

<sup>(38)</sup> C. I, n. 1.

the very earnestness of his words, indicates most clearly how much he had obedience at heart. He desired, above all things, that this virtue should be perfect *always, and in every respect—perfect* in the execution, in the will and in the understanding. Hence it is manifest that the difficulty of the thing commanded exempts no one from the obligation of obedience.

I know, indeed, that the rule of having a companion is trying and burdensome to not a few. But the twenty-second General Congregation<sup>(a)</sup> thought it necessary, even in these times; and recommended *specially* to Father General “that what is ordered in the third part of the Constitutions, Chap. 1, § 3, and in other parts of the Institute, concerning the companion of those who go out, *be observed with all accuracy*, and that, if any relaxation should have crept in, it *be by all means corrected*. And this is to be understood as applying particularly to the 18th rule of priests.” These regulations are not left to our free will and discretion; they were made to be observed with *all accuracy*. Reverend Father Beckx, in the letter I have just mentioned, and in compliance with this decree, asked all superiors: “To set great importance on the rule of a companion, and to take care that it be faithfully observed.”<sup>(39)</sup>

I, too, must obey this same decree; and, relying on God’s help, I will take care to give an example of obedience. But, as in every difficult matter, so also in this, all should *combine with* superiors to carry out the rule—a recommendation which the sixth Congregation declared to be of great importance. Now, they do not combine with superiors, who will not obey a law, be it what it may, though it be written, promulgated or renewed, until they are individually admonished, and driven to compliance.

They do not assist superiors, who desire exemptions from the rule. Some think that they are safe, provided they obtain a dispensation; and, as a consequence, they harass superiors, until they have obtained what they desire. They do not reflect that it is very disagreeable to superiors to refuse; that others are induced by their example to make like requests; that thus, by numerous

<sup>(a)</sup> Decr. 44 n. 3.

<sup>(39)</sup> Epist. 5 Feb., 1860.

exceptions, discipline begins to totter, and every prescription of the Institute becomes ineffectual and is rendered useless.

Moreover, there are some who rely too much on these words of the 10th rule of the Rector : " It belongs to the Rector to dispense from the rules . . . . when necessity requires." Let them listen to the interpretation of this rule, given in the first of the Instructions. It reads as follows : " Another cause of this is excessive suavity and indulgence, when . . . . superiors think that dispensations are of little importance, and are under the impression that it is in their power *to dispense* and to loosen the reins of government as they wish ; just as if whatever is done with the Rector's knowledge is forthwith to be judged right, and in keeping with religious life. Certainly, no sentiment can be more harmful to a religious order than this." <sup>(40)</sup>

Now, they do very serious injury to the Society, who oppose this rule of the companion, render fruitless the efforts of superiors to secure its observance, and even try to bring over others to their way of thinking. Such men are laboring to despoil religious life of much of its dignity, and the Society of its attractiveness. For this law has been enacted in zeal and love for us, that men may think well of us, that our reputation may be safe from enemies, that we may not merely strive to be, but also be reputed, angels, for God's greater glory. How many a youth has entered the Society, moved by the angelic manners which he perceived in Ours. We, assuredly, wish the fame of the Society in this point to be preserved unsullied ; we even regard it in the light of a divine favor. And if it be a grace and favor, where is the excuse for complaining ? No one is surprised when complaint is made of what is hurtful and injurious ; but who can restrain his amazement, when he hears men pouring forth complaints and lamentations for such a grace and privilege ?

Believing, as I do, that this rule is of the greatest utility to the Society, I shall use my best endeavors to urge, and insist on, its observance, as far as circumstances of time and place permit. And, since some have interpreted what I wrote on the 24th of May,

<sup>(40)</sup> Instr. ad aug. cons. spir. in Soc., c. ii. n. 2.



1885, concerning the rule of the companion — that a beginning should be made in observing the rule—as meaning that only a beginning, not the perfect observance of the rule, was asked for ; in order to take away all doubt, I answer them in the words of St. Thomas : “ Beginnings and increase are not sought after for their own sake, but for the perfect work.” <sup>(41)</sup>

There are other rules intimately connected with the rule of having a companion, in the observance of which we must also help superiors. For it depends in a great measure on the will of Ours whether these rules shall be observed. The seventieth rule of the Rector says : “ Let him not permit Ours to visit women, or to write letters to them, except in case of necessity, or when there is hope of *great* fruit. Nor should he permit this to any but men of tried virtue and prudence.” The seventy-first rule says : “ He should not permit women to enter our college.” And, finally, the seventy-fourth says : “ He should not permit Ours to take meals with externs, or, in sickness, to be visited by them, unless reasons of grave moment induce him to grant the permission.” In all these matters we should not ask the superior to grant permissions which the rule forbids ; but rather, in union with him, we should endeavor to have the rule observed, in accordance with God’s will. Moreover, these rules are so clear and explicit, that no one can be in doubt about their meaning. And to speak of letters : it is plain that we should rarely write to women, and more rarely still to nuns. Fr. Nigronius speaks on this subject with even greater severity : “ We must distinctly notice that masters of the spiritual life not only warn us to abstain from intercourse by letter with women, but they more especially and emphatically require this, when there is question of nuns.” <sup>(a)</sup> He then gives very serious reasons for not writing to nuns, adduced from the sayings and examples of holy men. The principal reason is that letters easily lead to intimacy, and to giving and receiving gifts and presents ; and thus by degrees they diminish that supernatural love which should unite the instrument with God. St. Jerome tells us in de-

<sup>(41)</sup> 2-2, q. 184, a. 5, ad 1.

<sup>(a)</sup> Tr. asc. xii. c. 3, n. 20.

tail what should be avoided in this matter : "Frequent presents," he says, "handkerchiefs, scarfs and keepsakes pressed to the lips, offerings of dainty meats, and soft, sweet letters are not signs of holy love."<sup>(42)</sup> I am well aware that none of all these things take place in the Society ; yet I thought I ought to call attention to them, in order to suggest the danger. Fr. Nigronius pertinently says : "While a youth, I learned myself, from the misfortune of others, that the world, which is seated in wickedness, is always disposed and ready to interpret unfavorably letters written by religious to women."

On my part, Rev. Fathers and most dear Brothers, I only ask for what has the sanction of our rules, for what I am bound to ask—and that I do ask again and again. And in the matter which we are now dealing with, God's will is made clearly known to us by the thirty-ninth rule of the Summary, which prescribes that letters by Ours must be shown to him who is deputed by the superior, who also must read the letters sent to Ours. If any one assert that this cannot be done, he will not, on that account, excuse the neglect of an obligation : he who fails to fulfil the duty of reading letters sent to Ours, or received by them, acts contrary to the rule. Neither must the Rector's seventieth rule be neglected, nor permission be granted to every one to write to women : it should not be granted even to grave and very prudent men, unless *great fruit* is hoped for. If this were observed, some would pen fewer letters ; nay more, these few would become fewer still, if it were known that they were read. Thus it would happen that one rule would help another.

I now approach a most serious matter, one which at all times has been a source of anxious care to the Society, and which even now alarms those who deserve best of the Society, and are most watchful over our common safety. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man."<sup>(43)</sup> In obedience to this teaching of St. James, let us carefully avoid excess in words, and undue

<sup>(42)</sup> Epist. ad Nepot. 6, al. 52.

<sup>(43)</sup> St. James iii. 2.

licence in the use of the tongue, which is "a world of iniquity," an instrument fitted for the commission of every kind of crime; which "defileth the whole body," staining it with vice; which "inflameth the wheel of our nativity," in other words, contaminates the whole course of our life, from the beginning to the end; and is itself "set on fire by hell," through the corruption which the devil has burnt into our fallen nature; which is, in fine, "an unquiet evil full of deadly poison."

These words of the apostle warn us forcibly of the dangers with which the tongue threatens us. And the teaching is not dissimilar which we find in the *Industriae* upon the "Means for curing the diseases of the soul." Therein are recorded the sayings and actions of the saints, which show clearly the malice of detraction. St. Basil punishes the detractor most severely and separates him from others, so that no one may wish even to work with him. St. John Chrysostom declares that the detractor inflicts on his brethren wounds more poignant than those of arrows; that he is carried away by covetousness and by envy; and that his crime can be justly compared in enormity with that of sacrilege, violating as he does, in a certain sense, the very body of Christ our Lord.

The evils which such a person causes are very grave indeed. Peace, tranquillity of mind, obedience, and the fruits that should result from our ministry are entirely destroyed. But the most terrible evil of all is this, that detractors work harm, not only when they speak, but for long years after. Evil reports and suspicions are not confined to the house, where one's good name and reputation have been undermined; they spread abroad, and are disseminated through the entire province, until a man finds, sometimes, those whom he has never injured, whom perhaps he has never seen, entirely estranged from him. These statements I do not put forward as my own; but as they have been made to me by men of great authority. Should any be culpable in this matter, I beg them to consider that their sin is the more grievous, as the pain they cause their brother is the more severe. And, what grief of mind, think you, must his be, who learns that his good name and reputation



have been lessened not in one house, but in many, and perhaps not amongst Ours only, but even amongst seculars?

He, indeed, can not protect himself against the injury done his reputation; but God, who says: "Revenge is mine, I will repay," will surely undertake the defence of the reputation thus destroyed, and will demand at the hands of the detractors the severest penalties. God grant that those penalties be confined to a few, that they fall not on entire communities and on provinces.

Who can doubt that the servants of the devil deserve punishment? Now, that detractors serve the devil, no one can deny. Father Paul Segneri asserted, on the authority of St. James, that the tongues of such "are set on fire by hell," and that the detractor is assisted by the devil, in a very special manner, to carry out the devil's work. For, to disturb peace, to destroy charity, to cause dissensions, is undoubtedly the devil's work.

Father Segneri clearly proves that the devil is present to assist detractors, by the fact, which he states, that men, otherwise slow, dull, obtuse and stupid, often display a surprising skill in injuring their neighbor's reputation.

Those who indulge in useless journeys become sometimes addicted to this vice. They spy out and pry into everything, publish the result of their investigations through the provinces, talk much of the manner in which superiors govern, of various abuses, of careless and relaxed discipline. Such matters form the topic of their conversations, after they themselves have injured the discipline of other houses, caring little about rules, transacting matters of business without the knowledge of the superior, calling on externs, dining with them, revealing the faults that may exist in the province, visiting convents, inspecting picture galleries and museums of every kind, and generally indulging their inclinations in things not in accordance with our rules, nor approved by the superiors of that house or province, where they have received hospitality.

The remedy for all the evils of the Society is in our Constitutions. If there appear any falling away in piety, obedience or charity; if the number of suitable postulants be small; if our min-

istry be without fruit ; if our resources be squandered or entirely lost—all must be brought back to the standard of our rules. If we obey our rules, those especially which belong to each one's particular office, if we fulfil religiously and perfectly the requirements of poverty, obedience, charity, we shall follow the path which, as St. Ignatius pointed out, is a path to God.

To God, I say ; Whom, as St. Ignatius exhorts, we must keep before our eyes always and above all things, withdrawing our affections from all that might hinder our union with Him, performing our duties in good order, religiously, lastingly, obediently, with combined efforts and united hearts. In this way shall we crush the rebellion of the flesh, of the senses, of love of the world and of self, and gain the glory of a martyrdom, unbloody, indeed, yet glorious before God. Then shall we be of one mind with our laws themselves, we shall love them, and we shall confess with David to the Lord, “ much peace have they that love Thy law.” <sup>(43)</sup>

And, since the Roman Pontiffs Themselves have exhorted superiors “ to watch with great care over the observance of our decrees,” in order not to fail in my duty, and to consult for my own eternal salvation, I exhort, I admonish and I implore all superiors, by the Blood of the Son of God, by the tears which St. Ignatius shed while writing our rules, and the cruel penances he inflicted on his body, by the ashes of Blessed Edmund and his fellow martyrs, to see to the observance of every law laid down for us, as far as may be possible ; and I exhort, admonish and implore all the members of the Society to unite with their superiors in a work destined to promote so greatly God's glory and our own sanctification.

I am well aware that what I ask is full of difficulty ; I do not deny that its execution requires generosity and resolution. But I am addressing men of great soul, ready to suffer “ the injuries, reproaches and outrages, that attach to the livery of Christ.” <sup>(a)</sup> I am addressing them in the presence of our beatified brethren, whose life not less than death was a continued martyrdom ; who enjoyed

(43) Ps. 118, 165.

(a) Exam. gen. c. 4, § 45.

no security from most cruel enemies ; who, condemned to death before they were yet captured or recognized, were forced to hide in the hollows of walls and arches, and, when at last taken, had to suffer public mockery, the rack, and that other instrument of unheard of cruelty, which robbed them always of the use of life, and not seldom of life itself, rending their limbs with most dreadful torture. I am addressing them in the presence of those martyrs, who suffered an unjust sentence and a death full of ignominy, whose hearts were torn out of their bleeding breasts ; whose bodies were quartered, seethed, and hung upon the city towers and gates ; who were deprived of funeral rites, and left without the honor of a tomb. These punishments, foreseen by the martyrs, proclaimed by the judges, and applauded by ignorant crowds, did not terrify their heroic souls.

In the presence of these martyrs, what do I beg for, what do I demand ? That same thing, Reverend Fathers and most dearly loved Brothers in Christ, which our martyrs ask from us. They ask that we too shall not fear to perform what we ourselves promised, when consecrating ourselves to the Eternal King : " Receive, O Lord, all my liberty." This was our intention, this our determination, this the beginning of our unbloody martyrdom.

What we promised as young soldiers in this new warfare, we must now perfectly perform. Charity then moved us to offer ourselves to God, in readiness for labors and for difficulties. The same charity, the same love of God must now be perfected. Charity inflames men with the desire of martyrdom ; charity inflames them, too, with the desire of the religious life. " For," as the Angelic Doctor says, " martyrdom is an act of charity, which commands it, it derives its merit from charity ; and, without charity, it is of no avail." <sup>(44)</sup>

Bloody and unbloody martyrdom have this resemblance to each other, that the charity which is already perfect in the martyr, the religious must perfect by lengthened effort. This manner of perfect-

<sup>(44)</sup> 2-2, q. 124, a. 2, ad 2.



ing charity compels us to endure a kind of martyrdom, and, therefore, to tread in the footsteps of our martyrs. When God demanded their life, they gave it back to Him. We, too, must restore to God that liberty of which our rules deprive us, with such completeness, "that no point of perfection, which by God's grace we can attain, in the perfect observance of *all* the Constitutions, and in the fulfilment of the peculiar spirit of our Institute, be omitted by us." <sup>(a)</sup> When our martyrs were called on to make the sacrifice of their lives, with what feelings did they make it? Edmund triumphantly exclaimed, when the rope had been fastened around his neck, "we are made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men." Thomas Cottam, when just about to die, cried out: "Far be it from me, to depart even a hair's breadth from my faith, for any motive whatsoever." Alexander Bryant carried the crucifix in his hands, when led before the judges, and, when ordered to cast it from him, replied: "Not so; that will I never do; I am a soldier of the Crucified; I will not desert His standard until death. I will die for Him, Who first died for me." He was a most valiant soldier, resolved, as the formula of the Institute expresses it, "to serve God unto death, under the standard of the cross." In prison he had bound himself by vow to that service. When martyrdom was already close at hand, when he was about to grasp the prize, when he beheld heaven open to receive him, he thought that the victory was not sufficiently secure, unless he ended his glorious career in the Society of Jesus. So much did he esteem our mother, the Society, when about to enter heaven. God approved his appreciation of our Order, and deadened almost every sense of pain, when afterwards he was stretched upon the rack. Not yet one of Ours, he so loved the Society, that he wished to receive the palm of victory in the Society of Jesus. The same love certainly animates us, Reverend Fathers and dearest Brothers in Christ. But what is love of the Society, if not love of our rules? Our brothers, the martyrs, "would not break the holy law of God, and were put

<sup>(a)</sup> Reg. Summ. 15.

to death.”<sup>(45)</sup> Our rules also are a holy law, as Christ’s Vicars testify. With Mathathias, therefore, will I say : “ Now therefore, O my sons, be ye zealous for the law, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers.”<sup>(46)</sup> The rules and the examples of our ancestors constitute for us this covenant.

For this covenant let us be prepared to lay down our lives ; to be slain, rather than prove faithless to our laws. Let not the fear of men move us, nor the favor of men, nor human reasons, nor labors, nor difficulties, nor misfortunes. We must strive after this alone :—to keep God before our eyes always and above all things, to seek His greater glory in every action, in every thought, in every undertaking.

Such is the nature of our martyrdom, such the nature of the service to be performed under the standard of the cross. Edmund and his companions, it seems to me, are earnestly encouraging us who serve under this standard of the most holy cross ; are addressing us as Mathathias, that illustrious captain in Israel, addressed his sons : “ You, therefore, my sons, take courage and behave manfully in the law, for by it you shall be glorious.”<sup>(47)</sup> We, too, desire ardently that the Society may be glorious. Now, the Society of Jesus has been glorious in the law, and in the law it will be always glorious. We must, therefore, behave manfully in the law, that, true to our name, we may be most faithful to our divine Saviour, and that each one of us, whatever his strength may be, may give himself without reserve to Christ the Redeemer. For to us also Christ our Lord makes the promise, only more unfailingly, which Mathathias made his sons : “ You shall receive great glory and an everlasting name.”

Our martyrs, Edmund, Thomas and Alexander, truly Blessed, have already happily received that glory. They desire earnestly that we too should be among the blessed. The way to eternal happiness and glory lies open to us ; for our holy Father, St. Ignatius, holding out the Institute, declares : “ *This is the way to God.*”

(45) I. Mach. i. 66.

(46) Ibid. ii. 50.

(47) Ibid. ii. 64.

This our law contains nothing but what is righteous and holy ; this our law makes heroes ; this our law prepares eternal palms—crowns of a bloody martyrdom for some, crowns of a bloodless martyrdom for others.

I commend myself and the whole Society to your holy Sacrifices and prayers,

Reverend Fathers and most dear Brothers,

The Servant of all in Christ,

ANTHONY M. ANDERLEDY, S. J.

*Fiesole, Feast of All Saints, 1887.*



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XXIV.

A LETTER OF OUR VERY REV. FATHER ANTHONY M. ANDERLEDY TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS ON FREQUENTLY RENEWING THE MEMORY OF THE GLORIOUS DEEDS OF STS. PETER, JOHN, AND ALPHONSUS.

When in the sixty-fourth year of this century Peter Canisius, and, in the year following, John Berchmans had been enrolled in the catalogue of the Blessed, the Father General addressed a letter in 1866 to the whole Society ; and he deemed it incumbent on him to do so again, when Pius IX. ratified the worship shown by the faithful to Blessed Peter Faber. I intended to do the same when our three Brothers were crowned with the honors of heaven's Saints. But many obstacles have delayed me in accomplishing this desire. For to the burdens of an office which, in the opinion of St. Ignatius,<sup>(1)</sup> "demands more than the whole man," there were added unusual occupations, which consumed much time, and more than once absorbed the labor of several months. Hence this unpleasant delay, which, however, did not happen without a Divine Providence. For the fervor of our Society was quickened when for the first time the festivals of our three Saints were celebrated ; and so great was your zeal for the glory of our three Brothers that it would have been vain to give an impulse to your devotion. God seemed to speak to you, and himself to address you. And that you were obedient to this divine voice many instances of your virtue, many a holy endeavor to tread in the footsteps of our Saints, bear witness.

(1) Const., p. 9., c. 6, n. 4.

It was not, therefore, reasonable to impel faster those who were already hastening, and to exact with importunity offices of devotion which were exhibited with promptness. But since our weakness is such that things which are familiar slip from the mind, or at least begin to move and affect us less, I have thought it proper, after this brief interval of time, to recall again the memory of the virtues of Sts. Peter, John and Alphonsus, that we may cheerfully renew from time to time the purposes which we have already made. This will be quite in keeping with that love and veneration which we pay to these Saints ; since each of us, whatever be his grade in the Society, whether priest, scholastic or lay brother, has here the model set for his imitation.

Besides, it is clear that this is the very benefit which it was the intention of Leo XIII. to bestow upon the Society. For, with singular kindness and good-will towards us, he of his own accord, without being asked, exercised his Pontifical authority to decree that three Causes of the Society should be taken up ; and, besides, he selected these three of Ours, who were then Blessed, to be placed in the rank of Saints. The Vicar of Christ was urgent that they whose care it was should be zealous in bringing the matter to an issue. Time and again he urged me to gather the evidence of documents bearing on the subject ; and, indeed, so earnest was the Sovereign Pontiff in our behalf, that he often expressed to myself and others the desire he had of bestowing on these our three companions, the honors of canonization.

Now, since they have shed the lustre of their holiness on the three grades of our Society, we do well in often turning to them, that, luminaries as they are of our Society, they may direct our lives to the likeness of theirs, whether it be in the lowliest of grades, or in the hidden life of home, or on the open plain of apostolic labor.

True, these three companions of ours excelled in all manner of virtue ; still those virtues shine brightest in each, which

were most in keeping with his particular grade. And, since the chief duty of the lay brothers of the Society is that, while engaged in humbler offices, they lift up their minds to those heights which have been shown us by God, they have received in Saint Alphonsus a guide and model ; and they may emulate his glory with a holy zeal.

I. In St. Alphonsus, above all other virtues, two are specially brilliant, his humility and his union with God. These virtues win favor with God, and gain the hearts of men. To speak of humility : it has modesty for a companion ; that modesty which helps so much to captivate the esteem of men, and to preserve charity and kindness amongst all. Nor modesty only, but a seemly group of other virtues accompany it. For the virtues are so related and joined to one another, when they are perfect, that whoever is possessed of one, cannot be destitute of the others. And if this be true of all the moral virtues, much more so is it true of humility, the source, the root of all. For out of this root spring the others ; and, the greater its vitality and vigor, the fairer in form and the richer in fruit do the rest of the virtues bloom. Therefore it is that whilst all virtue is agreeable, most of all is humility amiable.

Amongst men this virtue is prized and honored ; for they cannot but esteem, as one superior to themselves, him whom they see untouched by the passion for fleeting renown.

But with God humility has the greatest power. It brings man into subjection to God's will ; it receives in return the infusion of divine grace ; and the Lord lovingly takes unto his favor and friendship the man who has learned to despise himself, to hold himself as nothing worth.

Although this virtue meets with reverence, still most men, with their inborn thirst for honors, fear, hate, shun nothing



so much as belittling themselves, or being neglected by others: "Humility is an abomination to the proud man." <sup>(2)</sup>

When men find one exalting himself, boasting of his achievements, they are wont to bring him down with jest and mockery. It is the lot of those who admire themselves, who talk about their worth, and would have others do likewise, that they are themselves despised, and made the laughing-stock of others.

This mockery might be made light of, if it were not that cause is given for it, and that the vainglorious man has God himself against him. For as humility is charming, so is arrogance hateful in God's sight. And the Lord most high, and terrible "resisteth the proud man." <sup>(3)</sup>

How, then, does it come to pass that so few men strive for self-abasement, while all the world is anxious for glory? Why do men cherish in their own breasts that which they deride in others? Why will men struggle to resemble those whom they despise?

Great indeed is their blindness. They do not understand that whatever makes for the laying and breaking down of pride is a favor and a gift from heaven. Nor can they ever understand it, if they measure by a human standard what must be weighed only by faith divine.

The maxim is from heaven, that "humiliation followeth the proud: and glory shall uphold the humble of spirit." <sup>(4)</sup>

We are taught from on high that in nothing is man to glory but in the ignominy of the cross. "God forbid that I should glory," exclaims the apostle, "save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." <sup>(5)</sup> This same apostle we find glorying in the hatred of men, in perils from the Jews, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils from false brethren. <sup>(6)</sup> "From the Jews," says he, "five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned." <sup>(7)</sup>

<sup>(2)</sup> Eccl. xiii. 24.

<sup>(3)</sup> James iv. 6.

<sup>(4)</sup> Prov. xxix. 23.

<sup>(5)</sup> Gal. vi. 14.

<sup>(6)</sup> II. Cor. xi. 26.

<sup>(7)</sup> II. Cor. xxiv. 25.

But this marvellous man looked "on Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame."<sup>(8)</sup>

The divine Author of our faith, rejecting all human glory, said: "But I seek not my own glory."<sup>(9)</sup> "A man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity."<sup>(10)</sup> "He giveth his cheek to him that striketh him, he is filled with reproaches."<sup>(11)</sup> There came a man "than whom greater hath not arisen among them that are born of women;"<sup>(12)</sup> "he came neither eating nor drinking; and they say: He hath a devil."<sup>(13)</sup> What more atrocious charge could one man level against another? Yet this same calumny was hurled against the Son of God. Still, He sought eagerly a deeper, yea the deepest ignominy, when He chose to undergo upon an eminence in view of a vast throng of men, the most infamous of deaths. And that death He suffered amid the jeers of the mad rabble. Their "crucify him, crucify him" rose again and again: "they cried out the more: crucify him."<sup>(14)</sup> And it was not the few who manifested this hate, this envy; but with one voice "they say all: Let him be crucified."<sup>(15)</sup>

Nor has the King of Glory permitted this, His shameful death, to be buried in oblivion; He has willed that it be recorded upon the page of history; that it be rehearsed in the book of sacred laws published throughout the world: He has decreed that His cross—the symbol of all sorrow—be set up for view in the churches, in our homes, on the public ways. And he has ordered that in that act of supreme worship paid to the Most Holy Trinity, in the Sacrifice of the new law, eternal remembrance be made of this infamy.

Now these things "to them indeed that perish are foolishness;" the wisdom of God "is in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which none of the princes of this world knew."<sup>(16)</sup>

<sup>(8)</sup> Hebr. xii. 2.    <sup>(9)</sup> John viii. 50.    <sup>(10)</sup> Is. iii. 3.    <sup>(11)</sup> Jer. Lam. iii. 30.

<sup>(12)</sup> Matth. xi. 11.    <sup>(13)</sup> Matth. xi. 18.    <sup>(14)</sup> John xix. 6.    <sup>(15)</sup> Matth. xxvii. 22.

<sup>(16)</sup> I. Cor. i. 88, and ii. 7, 8.

But our lowly janitor, St. Alphonsus, knew this wisdom of God, and prompted by this faith, guided by those truths which have been shown unto us from on high, he manifested such a greed for ignominy as must seem well-nigh marvelous. For him it was not enough that he left no opening for deceitful thoughts of vain glory, that he never made mention of his own interests, that he flattered no desire to receive honor from men. His ambition was to be esteemed by no one ; to be ranked beneath all, to be counted for nought. He went further still. He longed earnestly that men might despise him, and show their contempt in word and action. Indeed, whatever would lessen his praise or diminish the esteem in which he was held, this he sought for, and begged of God with special fervor.

And God hearkened to his prayers ; for He is wont to deck and adorn with the livery of His holy cross those whom He specially loves, those whom He draws in a singular manner to union with Himself.

Not to speak of other instances, it happened to this holy man that after he had executed the orders of one superior, another would, for the purpose of testing his humility, roundly upbraid him in public. Sometimes, to prove his virtue, superiors imposed upon him tedious and difficult tasks. But the saintly old man took the one and the other calmly, quietly, and with such evident joy that one would think he had obtained some cherished boon. Many such things are narrated of St. Alphonsus ; and, through it all, we see with what exalted wisdom and evidence he had grasped that truth which has escaped people considered most wise ; namely, that true glory, enduring glory must be purchased with humility and with patience under shame.

Truly a man of wisdom, who saw this truth and understood it ; a man of lofty spirit, who did not fear to carry out in practice the lesson of patience which he had once understood !



There are men who will imperil their very lives for the sake of honor, and who lose their manliness at the thought of insult. But, out of the humble rank of lay brothers, there has come into the clearest light a man of spirit far above the heroes of the world—with that spirit, I mean, which the Constitutions of our Society awake and arouse.

And this same spirit is an evidence to men of what our manner of life and our rules can accomplish ; yes, those rules of ours, which cleanse the soul of even the slightest blemish ; which deck it with all virtue ; which bring the man so close to God, that St. Alphonsus, who followed them most faithfully could say with truth : “ I live now not I, but Christ liveth in me.” <sup>(17)</sup> While men are running after riches and honors and pleasures ; while they hold these objects to be the greatest of blessings, and believe they have gained the highest good, once they have set their feet on the pinnacle of fame ; Alphonsus seeks what is above all these. There is no room in his heart for the things of earth. His only glory is that of the Son of God, who humbled himself, “ becoming obedient,” <sup>(18)</sup> making himself “ the reproach of men and the outcast of the people.” <sup>(19)</sup>

This is what he learned from St. Ignatius, who, leaving an imprint and picture of his own lofty soul in the first and general examen, <sup>(20)</sup> admonishes us “ to loathe all that the world loves and embraces.”

This lofty scorn for the vanities of life is characteristic of holy men. All things “ I count as dung,” <sup>(21)</sup> cries the apostle. “ To be thought, and to be foolish ” for Christ, <sup>(22)</sup> is the watchword of St. Ignatius. The aim of both is the same. The Apostle would gain Christ ; Ignatius would “ put on the garment and livery of his Lord.”

Now, St. Alphonsus reached by his humility, in such a

<sup>(17)</sup> Gal. ii. 20.      <sup>(18)</sup> Philipp. ii. 8.      <sup>(19)</sup> Ps. xxi. 7.      <sup>(20)</sup> C. iv. n. 44.

<sup>(21)</sup> Phil. iii. 8.      <sup>(22)</sup> Ex. gen. c. iv. n. 44.

brief space, so high a grade of sanctity, because he had laid down for himself no other rule than that, to which he had bound himself to be faithful. Following this law, his example teaches us that man, with God's help, can rise to this sublime degree of self-abasement.

If, perchance, it be the lot of but few to acquire such great lowliness of heart, there are in this virtue other degrees easier to attain, which are not beyond the ordinary powers of religious men.

Every religious can avoid being proud of his talents and learning ; he can avoid making too much of success. He can shun self-esteem, or disregard for others' worth. He need say nothing boastful of himself, nor carp at the work of others, or pass over it slightly ; nor tear to pieces their good name. Every one of us, if we have done anything amiss, can acknowledge it, and do so publicly in the refectory. To perform lowly duties, according to the custom of the Society ; to submit to domestic discipline, to obey even the subordinate superiors ; to have one's faults reported to them ; all this is perhaps galling to the flesh, yet it is not beyond us. We should be prompt and eager to teach children and the ignorant, as this is among the principal obligations of the Society.

In no part of our life can we do without humility. For we are employed in high or low positions. Both fall to the lot of the Society. But these duties are to be undertaken in such a manner that he who has the more brilliant part to do should be equally ready to take the meaner. High offices frequently beget pride ; they are full of danger, and engender the false opinion, that it is the proper thing for this least Society of ours to think only of what is brilliant, and to claim it in preference to other priests, as if such preference were ours by some right of our own. This notion is most apt to bring us into odium with others. Would that it did not make us offensive to God himself ! It is certainly the origin of many a

trial and anxiety ; and we have nobody to blame but ourselves.

Moreover, this false conceit is fraught with the greatest danger. St. Francis Xavier wisely wrote as follows to Fr. John Rodriguez : " Beware of cultivating singularity by parading yourself before the world, and catching the popular applause ; rather let your evident purpose be to shun renown and an empty name. This boastful and arrogant ambition to become particularly famous has done much harm to many of Ours. When I returned from Japan, I dismissed many from the Society, because, among other things, I found them infected with this vice. Look to yourself and be very cautious to do nothing to cause your own dismissal. That you may live with becoming humility in the Society, often think of this, how much more you need the Society, than the Society needs you." <sup>(23)</sup>

With this warning of the Apostle of the Indies deeply fixed in our souls, our rivalry will be with our brethren for the poor cross of the Lord, not for reputation and the credit of a great name. Hence will proceed many great blessings. For humility and modesty win the hearts of men, keep away from us all hate and envy, and, best of all, make the Society pleasing and lovable in the sight of God. They cause in us a peace and joy so wonderful, that nothing troubles us, no anxieties harass us, no fears disturb us.

Possessed of this heavenly peace and joy Alphonsus gave over his whole mind, free from every worldly care, to his Lord. And God, who exalts the humble, <sup>(24)</sup> and of whom it is written : " His communication is with the simple," <sup>(25)</sup> flooded this humble soul with light from above. The writings of the saint testify to the deep and wonderful things which " He that teacheth man knowledge," <sup>(26)</sup> made known to him. God endowed him with a singular grace of prayer. Indeed, so gifted was the saint with this habit of divine intercourse that

<sup>(23)</sup> E. Goano, Coll. S. Fid. xi. Kal. Apr. 1552.

<sup>(24)</sup> Luke i. 52.

<sup>(25)</sup> Prov. iii. 32.

<sup>(26)</sup> Ps. xciii. 10.



he seemed to live by it. Nothing could draw him away from contemplating the Supreme Good.

St. Alphonsus made such progress, that, when meditating on the things of heaven, neither his mind nor his will ever strayed from the presence and love of God. His whole soul was illumined with the copious light of the divine truths. He shed sweet tears, while the glow of his soul within shone out around him, to the incredible astonishment and consolation of the beholder.

Whatever free time was left over in his employment, the saint spent in meditation on the love of God. He made the various engagements of his office so agree with his habit of prayer, that he neither failed ever so little in his duty, nor yet allowed his mind to wander from God. For it was his sweetest custom to take his rest in God's love, and in the love of his Blessed Mother.

Oftentimes our Immaculate Lady soothed his soul with her sympathy. She was at hand to help her client in his difficulties, and heaped upon him extraordinary and unheard-of favors. I mention one with feelings of admiration. Once when the holy brother had been appointed companion to a father going out of the house, the Queen of heaven appeared to Alphonsus, who was wearied from his journey, and she wiped the sweat from his face. Fancy the ecstasy of his throbbing heart, because he had found grace with the Mother of the Saviour, grace such as he had never dared even to conceive. Favors of this sort are not for kings and princes, but for the lowly servants of God.

St. Alphonsus, however, did not win these heavenly favors without hard fought and daily repeated victories over himself. He bore unflinchingly great irksomeness in prayer; nor did he on that account ever waver in this holy exercise, but persisted in it all the more, as far as his duties would allow. One can hardly believe how much he suffered from

the attacks of the devil, and with what steadfast and unbroken spirit he met them.

He esteemed highly, and followed most exactly, the method of prayer outlined by our holy Founder, St. Ignatius. Thus he became not only a devout man and one given to prayer, but he excelled in all those virtues, which ought to adorn the members of our Society. His piety enabled him to conquer himself, and lead a life free from every injurious attachment. How grievously mistaken are they, who think it enough to say prayers, while they never master themselves, nor overcome their passions, nor keep the rule of silence, nor bear patiently the labor and discipline of the house. In the sense of St. Ignatius, they do not offer to God any prayers at all, if they do not control their likings, keep down rebellious nature and hold in check the wildly roving senses. To such religious those others are similar, who set themselves up as inquisitors to pry into the affairs of others: who judge their superiors, and obscure the praiseworthy deeds and good name of their brothers. In this class also are they who, with a loose tongue, sow discord, weaken union, and loosen or sever the bonds of fraternal charity. We must be men of prayer to be obedient, to be lovers of poverty, and masters of our passions, to be exact in the fulfillment of duty, humble, charitable, patient.

Thanks to the grace of God, there are many coadjutor brothers who have acquired these virtues. Modeling their lives on that of St. Alphonsus they are pious, ready to work, think little of themselves, and covet extremely the meaner duties of the house: they are careful of the rule of silence, love poverty, venerate their superiors, help one another with true charity, and show reverence for the priests. If they commit a fault, they never fail to ask pardon for it, and beg a penance. The annals of the Society tell of many an humble brother who has gained the palm of martyrdom, or, in imitation of St. Alphonsus, has won an immortal crown,

because he was perfect in the virtues of common life. These men by their lives have made the Society honored and illustrious. What high merit and glory they have stored up for themselves, will be shown to all on the last day. Even in our own time there are many of the same rank who follow their Lord with eagerness, and who, beloved of God and man, most effectively help the Society to devote itself with more freedom to the work of saving souls.

But who are these men? Those who, as candidates, have been chosen with care and prudence; whose lives outside the Society have recommended them; who, before they applied for admission, superiors knew were studious in the practice of virtue. Characteristics of this kind cannot escape the notice of those who deal much with men, who form them into sodalities and exercise them in holy meditations.

These coadjutors are a consolation to the Society, who have been deemed fit for its service, been instructed and thoroughly imbued with the principles of religious life; who have not left the noviceship until they have given entire satisfaction to those in charge, and whose spiritual welfare in the colleges and houses has been an object of care. For the earnest diligence of superiors and spiritual fathers should follow up the training of the novitiate. If they call the brothers to see them from time to time, and require of them an account not only of their household occupations, but also of their love of prayer, their modesty, obedience, their poverty, and silence; if they speak to them of humility and contempt of the world, encourage them, console them, and are anxious to make the brothers feel that they are indeed our brethren, superiors and spiritual Fathers may be sure they are doing a work of the highest merit in the Society.

For virtuous coadjutor brothers are a great help to the Society. They contribute wonderfully to the maintainance of domestic order; and, by the care and labor they expend on us, they promote cheerfulness and a love for our vocation;



they protect common life, and make our houses agreeable ; so that, by their care for the comfort and satisfaction of all, they do away with any desire which might arise of procuring elsewhere the necessities or conveniences of life.

For this reason Rev. Fr. Mutius Vitelleschi writes : " With all earnestness and love I urge it, that our treatment of this grade of the Society be gentle, modest, kind, meek, patient. Let us treat them with the charity that is due to children of the same Father, and to men consecrated to God, who like ourselves serve that Master with whom there is no distinction of persons. Let us avoid any word, deed or sign that may embitter their minds, or lessen the confidence and love they feel towards the other grades in the Society. In a word, let us detest anything that may cause them to doubt the affection and esteem which others have for them." <sup>(27)</sup>

The eighth Instruction, moreover, admonishes superiors to be extremely cautious that the brothers be not despised by others, because of their offices ; that no one cast up to them as mean and slavish the occupations they are engaged in for the love of God.

In this same Instruction, the coadjutor brothers are told to make much of their humble lot. This is what it prescribes : " It will be the duty of the brothers to understand that what in the world is considered base and servile, is of great value in religion, and is most dear to God, since what they do, they do through obedience for the love of God."

Indeed these services are precious in the sight of heaven, because they are lowly, because they are done in religion, in a state which is one of permanency, and because they are undertaken for the love of God. This is evident from the singular favors and extraordinary graces which Christ our Lord and His most holy Mother granted to Alphonsus. Time and again did the Son of God and His Immaculate Mother take possession of the soul of Alphonsus, as if it were

<sup>(27)</sup> Epist. ad Provinc., an. 1618, vi. Kal. Jul.

their natural home. They filled it with such unspeakable sweetness, that he was sensibly conscious of their presence, and this not for a moment only, but for years. When he asked the Mother of God for some grace, he often heard this answer: "Doubt not, I will do it." "O my Lady, they are incomparably blest who gaze upon thy face in heaven!" And the Mother most benign appearing to her suppliant replied: "Thou too shalt see me."<sup>(28)</sup> On another occasion, while he was rapt in fervent prayer, the Queen of heaven gladdened his heart with words as sweet as ever came from the lips of the Mother of God: "How much I love thee, my son!"<sup>(29)</sup>

But, as this astonishing love which the Divine Redeemer and His most pure Mother showed to St. Alphonsus, filled him with awe and fear, the tender-hearted Mother came again to restore his courage and confidence: "Why should I not love thee," she said, "who lovest me so much?"<sup>(30)</sup> Amazed at the readiness with which the Blessed Virgin granted every desire of his heart, he heard her sweet voice asking: "Why should I not be faithful to thee, who art so true to me?"<sup>(31)</sup> Who can find words to express, or thoughts to conceive these wonderful favors of heaven? Finding his store of happiness full to overflowing, greater than man can hope to enjoy here on earth, the servant of God began to feel as one translated to the abode of the Blessed.

Now, how did St. Alphonsus come to deserve this clear and positive manifestation of love, on the part of God the Son and His divine Mother? In truth, it was by no other means than those which most men are averse to and carefully avoid: it was by leading a life the very name of which excites their alarm, and from the very thought of which they shrink, who have not their strength and resolution founded on the truths of divine revelation. For nature has instilled into our souls a desire for empty honors: while the divine wisdom of faith

<sup>(28)</sup> P. Nonell, Mem. n. 147.

<sup>(30)</sup> P. Non. ib. Mem. n. 161.

<sup>(29)</sup> P. Non. ib. Mem. n. 222.

<sup>(31)</sup> P. Non. ib. Mem. n. 205.

teaches us to glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we certainly have good cause to glory in that Cross, the ignominy whereof opened for us the way to our only true and eternal glory. The joys of heaven are the recompense of humility.

In that bright light of heaven, in which St. Alphonsus now dwells, he thinks with joy and exultation on the obscure lot which he chose in life. And looking up to him with love, we cannot but feel how right he was and how wisely he acted when, casting aside with scorn what men honor and esteem, he not only endured with patience and fortitude whatever had upon it the brand of contempt and derision, but even sought for and begged of God and his superiors occasions for the practice of humiliation. "O happy mortification," cries St. Peter of Alcantara, "that has brought me so much glory." "O happy humility," exclaims St. Alphonsus, "that has raised me to this splendid dignity."

Who among us would not wish that his life had been spent in obscurity, if thereby he might have a share in the glory of St. Alphonsus? Who would not wish to be despised and unknown, if thereby he might enjoy, like St. Alphonsus, the delight of union with God and the Immaculate Virgin? Who would not wish to perform the most contemptible of offices, to be the servant of his brothers, if thereby he might gain the home where St. Alphonsus lives in glory?

These are the holy wishes of each one of us, and God who pities all, and loves souls,<sup>(32)</sup> wishes all men to be saved.<sup>(33)</sup> And therefore the apostle announces to the faithful: "Having become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification and the end, life everlasting."<sup>(34)</sup> Glory follows sanctification, but humility goes before it, and without humility there can be no holiness. St. Ignatius was so thoroughly convinced of this, that he wished humility to be preached in our hearts and our ears, until we were persuaded that nothing is more necessary for our Society.

<sup>(32)</sup> Sap. xi. 24, 27.

<sup>(33)</sup> I. Tim. ii. 4.

<sup>(34)</sup> Rom. vi. 22.



Humility is the very beginning of our Institute ; it is the first object in that scope and aim of the Society, which delineates the whole form and structure of this splendid work. The first word that calls us to our standard, is humility. For we have not been invited to a standard, around which the proud and vainglorious cluster, but to the standard of the Cross. And under the standard of the Cross we must not imagine that we are chosen to perform deeds which the world calls glorious. Our duty, then, is to be lowly in mind and in speech, and never to shrink from self-abasement. Nay, more, our Society is bound by its laws to a life of submission and poverty ; in travelling, in our whole manner of life, we must resemble poor men. The Society professes to be so poor and destitute of all earthly goods, that we may not have what the poorest man can claim, money either for our own use, or even to give in alms. No one should be ashamed of poverty under the standard of the Cross. The world despises and shrinks from poverty, but we have chosen it to be our mother, and we must never suffer ourselves to be freed from the bonds of that dear captivity.

Poverty begets and fosters humility. Our Constitutions aim at the cultivation of this same virtue, when they bid us esteem in our hearts all as our superiors, consider the Society the least among religious Orders, take in good part to have our errors and defects manifested to the superior, and fulfil whatever penances shall be imposed upon us. Moreover, St. Ignatius would have those who wish to be admitted among us ready and eager to suffer insults and injuries, whether at home or in the world. He was persuaded that no one, in his Society, would refuse to practise obedience and self humiliation. <sup>(35)</sup> Unless this were so, how should we be able to give the account of conscience as the rule prescribes, not concealing a single temptation ; how should we be able to bear the

<sup>(35)</sup> Exam. gen., c. iv. n. 45.

restraint of constantly asking permissions ; or to observe the rule of not writing or receiving letters without leave ; of having a companion as the witness of our deportment ; in fine, how should we be able to obey promptly and perfectly, even in the smallest things, our rules and superiors, if pride, the enemy of discipline and order, were not banished from our midst ?

That characteristic virtue of the Society, that obedience, which should shine ever with the same bright, undiminished lustre, exhibiting us to the world as a picked and well-trying body of men, cannot abide where there is arrogance and pride. It is this obedience that subjects one to the authority of another, bringing mind and will into perfect harmony with rule and observance. And just as by his obedience, so too by his humility, the true son of the Society must be known. Therefore, if he who is not obedient cannot be called a legitimate child of the Society of Jesus, neither is that man sprung of the true stock, who does not strive after humility. For as there exists no Society in which obedience is more necessary than in ours, so also there is none that can less afford to do without humble subjects than the Society of Jesus.

The duty of our Society being to fight under the standard of the Cross, we must lay aside all vain pretensions, and show to the world in our looks, our carriage and speech, a modest decorum. This was the idea of St. Ignatius which he had learnt from the holy Scriptures. And indeed who is it that God wills to be saved ? The Royal Prophet answers : " He will save the humble of spirit." <sup>(36)</sup> Again, with confidence in the Lord, he repeats : " Thou wilt save the humble people." <sup>(37)</sup> From the same holy psalmist we learn whose prayer is acceptable to God : " He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble." <sup>(38)</sup> The valiant Judith recounting her own experience says : " The prayer of the humble hath always pleased thee." <sup>(39)</sup> The lowly in spirit are God's inti-

<sup>(36)</sup> Ps. xxxiii. 19.

<sup>(37)</sup> Ps. xvii. 28.

<sup>(38)</sup> Ps. ci. 18.

<sup>(39)</sup> Jud. ix. 16.

mate friends : " His communication is with the simple." <sup>(40)</sup> According to St. Paul : " God comforteth the humble and looketh down on the low things in heaven and in earth." <sup>(41)</sup> The book of Proverbs, speaking of those who despise the empty pomp of the world, says : " Humility goeth before glory." <sup>(42)</sup> It was holy Job's great consolation, that " God setteth up the humble on high." <sup>(43)</sup> Finally, in the light of all these testimonies, we may be able to understand the proverb of Solomon : " Where pride is, there also shall be reproach : and where humility is, there also is wisdom." <sup>(44)</sup>

What God thus declared, St. Ignatius showed confirmed in fact. With a wisdom equal to his humility, our holy Father knew that the strongest bulwark our Society could have, would be lowliness of spirit. So he called us the " least Society." But God wishing this least Society to be entirely His own, gave it the august name of Jesus. Our Divine Redeemer merited this great name when He submitted to the humiliating law of Circumcision. In like manner the Society, has striven to prove itself worthy of its name by self-abasement ; nor was it ever more illustrious than when it excelled in humility. For then it was most like unto our Lord Jesus Christ, in name and principle.

The prophetic spirit of St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier foresaw this, and therefore both of them, by every means in their power, urged the sons of the Society to be untiring and earnest in the practice of humility and obedience. Hence we find splendid examples of these virtues in the lives of our first Fathers and Brothers. They were eager for occasions of abasement ; they were even jealous of each other in their rivalry for the meanest occupations ; with cheerful hearts they set about teaching children and the lowest classes of the people. The tender love they bore their mother, poverty, was proved by the long journeys they took on foot. See

<sup>(40)</sup> Prov. iii. 32.

<sup>(41)</sup> II. Cor. vii. 6 ; Ps. cxii. 6.

<sup>(42)</sup> Prov. xv. 33.

<sup>(43)</sup> Job, v. 11.

<sup>(44)</sup> Prov. xi. 2.



them living in the public hospitals, eating the bread of the poor ; they were not ashamed even to appear in the midst of the Fathers of the Council of Trent, in their old and worn attire. And, far from having its fame tarnished, the Society gained for itself the praise and admiration of the world.

But, some one replies, we are living in a different age. Yes, our times are different ; easier perhaps, in appearance, but in reality much harder. In one respect, certainly, our age is not unlike the days of our Fathers ; we find in both the same arrogant spirit. In fact, it is even more insolent now, and boldly attacks all authority and rule. For what do ambitious and proud men care for reason or law ? They never seem to understand that whatever obedience is given or refused to those whom Divine Providence uses as the ministers of power, the same obedience is given or refused to the Divine Majesty of God. The number of such haughty spirits is portentous. All around us we see men who despise the restraints that are placed on their passions, who complain that their rights are infringed, while they themselves are not afraid to break down, by every means possible, the strength of that authority which comes from God. By the license they take in speaking, thinking and doing whatever they please, they must of necessity ruin society and overturn and destroy all union among men.

Therefore it was that God, who loves our Society with a special love, seeing that what has been the downfall of other Orders, might likewise sap the strength and life of ours, has, in His wise providence, enrolled among the saints two of our brothers, to be examples for us of humility and observance of rule. These are two bright stars of our Society ; and, although they are resplendent with every virtue, yet, in the saintly crown of each, there is one especial gem that shines out more brightly than any other ; in St. Alphonsus it is humility, in St. John, the faithful observance of our rules. God has been pleased that these two bright lights should

shine out at this time, in this age, to the end that we might understand wherein our Society pleases Him, what He asks of it, whom He considers worthy of His name and standard ; and lastly, after what pattern He would have us all be moulded and fashioned.

The heavenly honors, which even earth pays to our brothers, warn us that the safety and prosperity of our Society depend on the cultivation of the virtues for which they were canonized.

Let it be our firm resolve, then, to imitate the humility of St. Alphonsus, ennobled as it has been by the praises of heroic saints : and let us persevere and cherish our rule, living anew and breathing, as it were, in the holiness of St. John ; that so the same observances, the same rules, may live and flourish also in ourselves.

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II. As to St. John, it seems to me that he lived in heaven, and not on earth, even when his innocent soul was detained in the prison of the flesh. In his youngest years he had nothing light or boyish about him, nothing but what was staid and decorous. Far remote from actual fault, he shunned every danger of committing it. The things of this world caused the holy youth no anxiety. He admired no beauty save what was divine, or what elevated the soul to God. He sighed after no honors, nor had riches any worth in his eyes. He longed for no treasures which were not of heaven, and the only passion that stirred his breast was the spontaneous outburst of virtue yearning for eternal joys.

Placed under the training of the Society, he grew rapidly in divine things, and, when he was admitted among us, his wonderful holiness moved even the superiors of the novitiate to admiration. The hundred novices who were at Mechlin

had to acknowledge to the Master of Novices that they found no imperfection in him.

Afterwards, when he was sent to Rome, although the most flattering reports had preceded him there, yet on his arrival all had to confess, that what they had heard of him fell far short of the truth. He had the face of an angel; and it seemed to his companions as though Aloysius had come back to live with them again. In his demeanor and conversation he never allowed anything to appear that was not in accord with religious modesty, and, like the angels who stand before the throne of God, he never turned away his face from the divine presence. His amiability of manner seemed more peculiar to the society of the blessed than to men. And yet, with all this gentleness of character, he had a strong, manly way of showing his displeasure at any violation of rule or disobedience to superiors. Finally, he shunned those distractions which youth is so prone to seek after—novelty, variety, news—fearing lest his intimate union with God might be thereby impaired.

Is it any marvel then that acquiring such sanctity in so short a time, he became the delight and admiration of those who beheld his virtues? Young and old alike realized that this youth had reached the height of perfection to which even the tried virtue of many years could hardly aspire.

Nor need we explain how, in so short a time, St. John became so great a saint; it is known to you all. The great passion of his soul is best expressed in the Psalmist's words: "How have I loved thy law, O Lord."<sup>(1)</sup> This was the pious affection of his docile soul; "it is my meditation the whole day." (ib.) This was his steadfast purpose and resolution. He could, like the Royal Prophet, promise to God: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path."<sup>(2)</sup> The rule book was his dearest companion; it was the study of his life, and his superiors were its interpreters.

(1) Ps. cxviii. 97.

(2) Ps. cxviii. 105.



Without any exaggeration, therefore, we can say that St. John's whole life was crowned with a threefold glory : first, his own ; secondly, that of our holy Institute ; thirdly, that of the sage and holy direction which the youth received from his superiors.

Omitting the first of these, as we have already spoken of the excellent merits of our saintly brother, let us turn to our Institute and examine more carefully the marvellous effects that it wrought in him.

First of all, it was his delight to cultivate the interior life. He would not have it interrupted or languish in him ; external occupations had no power to separate him from God. Like all his companions, he had to perform the common duties and offices ; but he knew how to exercise an uncommon zeal in pleasing God, and thereby enriching and ennobling his work, so as to make it most precious in the sight of the Supreme Judge.

Thus, from day to day, he found greater favor with God ; and meaning to lead a life of closest intimacy with Him, cherished solitude with a particular affection, being wont to congratulate himself that he was allowed to live for years a life of retirement with his fellow-novices or scholastics. As our holy Father Ignatius says : " The more a soul lives separate and alone, the more does she thereby qualify herself to seek and find her Creator." <sup>(3)</sup> St. John, not content with merely reading these words, fixed them deeply in his mind, and showed by his conduct how well he had learnt them.

" *Amabo cellam* " " I will love the privacy of my room ; " such we gather from his notes was his resolution, from which he never swerved. His conviction on this point was that of St. Bernard, who, in a letter to the Brethren *De Monte Dei*, compares solitude to heaven, in these words : " One's cell and heaven are kindred dwelling places. Easy and frequent

<sup>(3)</sup> Spir. Exerc., Annot. 20.

is a monk's flight from his cell to heaven, but rare his fall from it into hell . . . for the reason that, unless destined for heaven, he will hardly persevere in his cell until death." Such is the opinion of this illustrious saint, who rendered incalculable service to the age in which he lived, who settled the disputes of provinces, kings and bishops, baffled heresy, restored peace to the Church, and roused the spirit of the crusade against the unbeliever.

As a love of retirement tends so largely to promote religious happiness, it cannot appear surprising, that the enemy of mankind takes alarm at a life of seclusion, and strives by lying arguments to throw discredit upon it. He hypocritically feigns compassion, and grieves that in solitude the mind becomes blunted and wit dulled, that fancy and imagination grow languid, that elegant and polished manners are neglected. All this the tempter bewails, while he omits to mention the fact, that the greatest men, even of pagan antiquity, had their meed of praise for a life of seclusion, or actually adopted it.

Cato tells us of a remark which Publius Scipio once made, to the effect, "that never was he less at leisure than when at leisure, nor less alone than when alone." Cato thought this sentiment worthy of record for posterity, and Marcus Tullius relating this same incident, exclaims: "Truly a noble saying and one worthy of a great philosopher; . . . leisure and solitude, two things which cause languor to others [probably the unwise] were wont to quicken this man's energy!"<sup>(4)</sup>

How much more ought they to quicken our flagging spirits, who spend some portion of our life in solitude and obscurity, not from love of ease, but from a desire to promote the glory of God! Such as give themselves up to a calling like this, so supremely divine, must be solicitous that the divine power of soul-saving grace enter their souls and stim-

<sup>(4)</sup> De offic. iii. 1.

ulate them, and, in the words of St. Ignatius, unite the instrument with God. For "in the matter of aiding souls . . . those means which unite the instrument with God . . . are of greater efficacy, than those which merely dispose it for dealing with men." <sup>(5)</sup> Our chief care and labor then ought to be spent upon the former. Of these means the chief are considered by our holy Father to be, "charity, a pure intention in the divine service, familiarity with God, and a genuine zeal for souls." <sup>(6)</sup>

Equipped with such helps as these, we are ready for the greatest achievements. Now what higher object of our ambition can there be, than the glory of our Lord; for the furtherance of which God is wont to teach a man and qualify him, apart from the turmoil of men?

Moses, before appearing as the liberator of the chosen people, lived in obscurity; the venerable prophets of old, who from solitude went forth to proclaim to the people the judgments and mercy of the Lord, lived in obscurity; that heroine, Judith, who made herself a private chamber in the upper part of her house, in which she abode, shut up with her maids, lived in obscurity. <sup>(7)</sup> John the Baptist, "the voice of one crying in the desert," <sup>(8)</sup> of whom the Church sings: "In thy tender years, flying the turmoil of the city, thou didst seek the caves of the desert," <sup>(9)</sup> lived in obscurity. The Immaculate Virgin lived in obscurity; the messenger of Heaven found the chosen Mother of God alone; and to the silence of solitude was confided the great mystery, which was afterwards to be announced to the whole world.

But what is most astonishing, Divine Wisdom Itself lived in obscurity, lived in obscurity for thirty years, lived in obscurity in the flesh, and even yet lives in obscurity among us, the Church thus worshipping the Man-God buried in the silence of the tabernacle: "*Adoro te devote, latens Deitas,*

<sup>(5)</sup> Const. p. x. n. 2.

<sup>(6)</sup> Const. ib.

<sup>(7)</sup> Judith, iii. 5.

<sup>(8)</sup> Matth. iii. 5.

<sup>(9)</sup> Brev. Rom. d. xxiv. Jun. ad Matut.



*quæ sub his figuris vere latitas.*" <sup>(10)</sup> It was, therefore, quite in accordance with Divine Wisdom to impose upon the Society a strict and prolonged seclusion from all intercourse with men.

Hence we cannot doubt that it was by divine inspiration St. Ignatius fixed a long period of years for the cultivation of virtue and science : of virtue first and foremost, because "it unites the instrument with God ;" then of science, because "it renders the instrument useful to our neighbor." <sup>(11)</sup> Familiarity with God is certainly a help for the attainment of virtue and science, while, on the contrary, frequent intercourse with externs is a hindrance. In support of such a prolonged training both in virtue and in science, one might allege the fact that men, who are eminent for learning and at the same time remarkable for virtue, accomplish greater things for the glory of God in a short time, than they do during many years, whose virtue and learning are but mediocre.

My purpose is to comfort our scholastics in their anxiety to be engaged as soon as possible in active works of zeal, for the glory of God and the salvation of men ; to relieve our dear brothers from that worry of mind which a secluded life is apt to engender. The tedium is relieved by contemplating the bright example of St. John, who took such wonderful delight in solitude ; and it is soothed by the sweet pleasures of the interior life, of union with God, of peace of soul, of modesty, of learning and efficiency and dexterity in leading souls to God,—fruits which we make our own, when away from the throng and company of men. Fruits like these amply repay us for the sacrifice of human consolations.

But we are not wholly deprived even of these ; for in our houses we associate with kind brothers, children of the same Society, intercourse with whom, more than any other kind, conduces, not to piety alone, but to culture, to learning, and

<sup>(10)</sup> Orat. post. Miss. Rhythmus S. Thomæ ad Sacr. Euch.

<sup>(11)</sup> Const. p. x. n. 2. 3.

to the most pleasant companionship. We are united to them by the most sacred bond of fraternal affection. "They are my brothers," St. John made answer, when asked why he so affectionately greeted even those members of our Society, with whom he had never before come in contact. "They are my brothers." A charming answer, truly; and one originating in faith, breathing a spirit of genuine love and devotion to the Society. Considering her as his mother, St. John could not but esteem and love, above all other men, the children of this most tender parent. Hence his religious happiness was complete; for in the Society he could serve God and spend his time with brethren, in whom his lively faith made him behold the Son of God, Christ our Lord.

His companions, too, in their turn, found it a real pleasure to be with him. And no wonder; for when our brothers see that their company affords us a particular satisfaction, they appreciate our charity, feel its influence, and are made to congratulate themselves upon their happy home in the Society.

Now, our Constitutions are very solicitous that this charity be preserved among us. And, inasmuch as the bonds of fellowship are not unfrequently relaxed among those who fail to associate together, it is enjoined that, as much as possible, we have things in common, meals, recreation, and the like. And, as there are those who need a more prolonged relaxation of mind, it is ordained that this should be sought in the company of our brethren. Those who need such relaxation are especially scholastics, masters, and professors, whose mental strain is intense and continuous. These are allowed to spend their vacation at the villa, not, however, without the restriction that "the gates should be kept shut and the enclosure secured." <sup>(12)</sup>

This regulation has, of course, been made from a sense of propriety, and that Ours may, by living together, enjoy in

<sup>(12)</sup> *Ordinat. general. c. 14, n. 1.*

common the same relaxation ; but it has, moreover, been dictated by the spirit of charity. The 14th Ordination, whilst prescribing what we call enclosure, at the same time, withdraws from the superior of the house the power of allowing anyone to go to " villas of externs, though they be relatives." (ib. n. 3.) The reason of this is that we spend our recreations more religiously with our brothers, than with others ; nor is it proper that we should seem to make more of the company of externs than of that of our brethren, who with ourselves have dedicated themselves and all they have to God and our Lord.

Our conduct should be ruled not by the senses, but by reason, and especially by faith. Faith tells us that fraternal charity springs from charity for God, to which it must be referred in such a way, that the love we show our brothers, be bestowed upon God rather than upon men. By this means respect will temper our affection, so that each one will resolve with St. John : " I will be intimate with no one." <sup>(13)</sup> Wonderful indeed was the control he exercised over the emotions of his soul, especially at an age which, in proportion to its physical vigor, lacks maturity of judgment.

But what may we not look for in a youth, who lacked no virtue, and in whom no fault was ever noticed even by those who generally are quick and ready to detect blemishes ? The minister of the Roman College wrote in this connection, that he never saw anything in St. John, nor heard anything about him from others, that was at all imperfect ; on the contrary, whatever he did, breathed a spirit of piety and admirable sanctity. This same fact others corroborated with sworn testimony. Fr. Thomas Bisdomini, a good and learned man, endeavored to detect, if possible, some fault, however light, in the conduct of St. John ; but he never found anything that bore the semblance of a fault. Such high sanctity did our Saint acquire in so short a time, that he appeared abso-

<sup>(13)</sup> Cepari, p. ii. § 7.



lutely perfect. What labor such a life entails, what heroism it displays, they know well who earnestly and steadily tread the path of perfection. That with God's assistance, however, such a high degree of perfection can be attained, is attested by the example of our holy brother. Let us then with sentiments of deep humility, return abundant thanks to the Divine Majesty, for giving to the Society a son who was to give evidence of such wonderful sanctity.

These triumphs of a holy life have covered St. John with imperishable glory, and added a singular lustre to the Society. For the trophies of piety and sanctity won by him, are a monument no less of the holiness of our Institute than of his own glory. It was from our Institute he learnt how to lead that spotless life, which prompted Christ's Vicar to enroll him among the saints of heaven. St. John had an exalted idea of our Institute, and so highly did he value his book of rules, that dying he clasped it in his hands, as if to show that, as far as in him lay, he would fain have taken it with him to heaven. And he did bear away into everlasting glory, a singular regard for the Constitutions, a most genuine love for them, and a heart full of gratitude for the founder of the Society of Jesus, St. Ignatius.

That St. John, in meriting such high favor with God, pursued no other path than that traced out for him by our Constitutions, is a fact so unquestionable and so well known, as scarcely to need recording here. So firm was his determination in this matter, that he resolved to endure all manner of hardships, to suffer anguish and affliction, death itself, rather than be guilty of even the least infraction of the rule.

Taking our Divine Saviour as his model, he determined "to fulfil all justice."<sup>(14)</sup> He was impelled by the love of Christ our Lord, who would regard with complacence his fidelity in all that the rules required. He was impelled by the love of the Society, which with him meant, not that sen-

<sup>(14)</sup> Matth. iii. 15 ; Cfr. Cepari, p. ii. § 6.

timent expressed in the empty praise of words, but that sturdy devotion which proves its sincerity by deeds. He was impelled, finally, by a most burning desire of holiness, and this he was persuaded he could not satisfy with greater dispatch or with greater safety, than by following his rule strictly. St. John, then, to increase from day to day the sanctity of his soul, was most careful to abide by the least points of our rules. These, as we know, direct with the highest wisdom our prayer, our union with God, and all the various occupations of the Society.

Our Saint, who was eminently a man of prayer, followed with great exactness and perseverance the method laid down by our holy Father, and avoided every form of prayer that was singular or foreign to our own. He followed accurately the lessons of that golden book of the Exercises, which so wonderfully promote union with God and purity of heart. In this way he succeeded in reaching such a state of perfection, that he gladly devoted his whole mind to God, and God in turn freely and generously communicated Himself to John. His progress, therefore, in every species of virtue was very great; a progress which can only be the outcome of a devout, genuine and solid spirit of prayer. They who neglect this spirit, though they bear the semblance of men of piety, are nevertheless not unfrequently led by their own judgment and governed by their own inclinations; they are far from having the requisite spirit of obedience: and, as for the other virtues, they practise them in such a manner, that however much they may seem to be religious, they are anything but religious of the Society.

St. John not only practised his duties of piety, but also fulfilled the offices of his grade according to the pattern of our rules. While engaged in the study of letters, though his talent was of a high order, yet the diligence he displayed was singular, such indeed, as Father Francis Piccolomini testified, he had never observed in any other of his pupils.

St. John was never ruled by his own desire, either in his reading or in his studies ; but even in the slightest matters followed the advice of his masters. He showed singular docility towards those who taught him.

As to superiors, he met with their approval not only by the strict observance of the rules, but also because he obeyed all their commands with the greatest exactitude. He committed to writing the orders which were read in the refectory, and often recalled them to mind, so as not to transgress them through forgetfulness. By means of this diligence and exactness, he did his whole duty perfectly, both as a religious man and as a scholastic of the Society.

This result he did not accomplish without difficulty ; for <sup>(15)</sup> “he attached the greatest importance to the least things,” and was fully determined (ib.) “to follow in all things the common life, and especially to avoid singularity.” Nor did he hesitate to confess how difficult the undertaking proved to him. (ib.) “My greatest mortification,” said he, “is the common life.” But, setting this shining example, he has had imitators, as well, by God’s favor, in later days as in times past. For, even now, out of the spirit of poverty, or of obedience, or self-control, in things very properly allowed by custom, some of Ours are to be seen relinquishing the common food, clothing and manner of life, only when ordered to do so by superiors, or compelled thereto by reason of broken health.

St. John was inflexible in maintaining the authority of the rules, and, as a memorial of his mind on the subject, he has left us this written resolution : “To detest as a plague any dispensation from the rules.” <sup>(16)</sup> This exemption from rule, if it comes to be of frequent occurrence, is the beginning of ruin in religious Orders ; for the strength and force it takes from the rules it hands over to license.

Severely, though not rashly, nay, holily and wisely, has

<sup>(15)</sup> Cepari, p. ii. § 14.

<sup>(16)</sup> Cepari, p. ii. § 6.



St. John spoken on this head. That easy dispensation from rule, for which there exists no just reason, and which is to be traced to self-love for its origin, he called a plague.

He calls it thus because, just as the general observance of the rules spurs on all to keep them, so the exemption of a few renders the weight of the rules galling to many.

He styles it a plague, because so long as that indulgence lasts, they who know how to act with address and boldness, triumph exultingly ; while modest men, who are for order and regularity, find cause to grieve.

He calls it a plague, because such ill-advised kindness leads to the devising of prettexts, whereby new comforts may be added to those already secured.

Again, he calls it a plague, because it weakens the virtue of some, while to others it brings ruin and the loss of their divine vocation.

Finally, he calls it a plague, because, if it be of frequent occurrence, it severs the bonds of religious discipline. For it obstructs that regular observance of the rules, in which all their vigor consists. The rules become silent when they are not kept ; nor do they affect anybody, when they are left in obscurity. Our fallen and rebellious nature easily allows of their remaining hidden in the book of the Institute ; neither will it, on that account, raise a storm of complaints ! But our nature takes it hard if they begin to live, or if dead they come to life again. Hence it comes that, where the granting of exemptions for any slight reason is customary, rules already existing almost lose force for good, or lie unheeded ; while those which are again brought to notice and begin to live, are scarcely born before they are suffocated ; and their observance is not yet given a trial, when they are overwhelmed with complaints, or are buried in the grave of silence and inaction. Thus, transgressions of the rules, and abuses against them, go safe from punishment ; and no stop can be put to them. Now, if these evils happen in the body

politic, as we see they do, we must use every endeavor to guard against their creeping into religion.

Hence, if we would be imitators of this most wise youth, we should detest as a very plague whatever is opposed to our Institute. We have made vows to God, and should therefore abhor whatever can endanger them; we should abhor everything that is opposed to poverty, to obedience,—everything that injures the fair name of the Society; we should abhor, as a plague, idleness and unnecessary journeys; and again that yearning after sights, and information about things, which happen to be striking, unusual, or novel; we should abhor whatever contributes to the mere pleasure of the senses, all that is forbidden in the strong words of the Constitution, part iii., c. i., n. 4: “All must be exactly careful to guard the gates of their senses (especially their eyes, their ears and their tongue) from all disorder.”

It is not any kind, but a “most exact” kind of guard that St. Ignatius enjoins; with which precept the minds of those certainly are not in accord, who think it necessary to know and investigate everything that seems admissible for men of the world to see and hear.

St. John carefully avoided whatever delighted the eye or was pleasing to the ear; and he kept a constant restraint upon his tongue. Although this be a task beyond the power of many, yet, for the love of our dear Saviour, men crucified to the world must use every means and effort to approach this illustrious model. For we say that we wish to be spiritual men. Then we must reject whatever is worldly, and be intent on heavenly things. We are dragged down to earth by the weight of nature; and they who are content with a middling degree of virtue do not reach that virtue which is even middling.

I congratulate the Society on the possession of very many sons, who are not only willing, but eager to lead a regular life, and who are zealous in the keeping of the rules. Such

men do not seek after special favors ; they shun what savors of the world ; they avoid useless visits to externs without a companion ; they avoid useless intercourse, especially such as decrees forbid to Ours ; <sup>(17)</sup> they detest unnecessary traveling, familiar correspondence by letter, visits paid to relatives, and absence from our houses for the sake of mere relaxation. These men abhor as a plague that freedom of action, which means living as one wills, without any rule.

There are causes, however, which require dispensation from the rule. Such is the case, for instance, when the reasons are so just, that we do not lessen our reverence for strict observance ; but rather we think of saving the rule from odium, in cases where it would seem to press too heavily ; and so we do not weaken it.

At times it is also necessary to endure existing evils ; nor can superiors punish all infractions of discipline. Leo XIII., with his accustomed wisdom, commenting on this topic has said : " The more evil must be put up with in a state, the farther is that kind of state from perfection. " <sup>(18)</sup> It is nevertheless our duty to reduce this tolerance of evil to the least degree possible. For what more concerns our salvation than, by the observance of the rules, to accomplish God's will, be models to our brethren, and lighten the burden of superiors, who have charge of religious discipline, and who, by the fact of their being fathers, find it very hard to inflict pain on those committed to their care, by having to refuse what is asked.

St. John always took care not to give superiors the least trouble, so that he was not easily given to asking for general permissions. He had made it a principle of his life : " I will not easily ask a general permission for anything. " <sup>(19)</sup> In order to live a holy life, he had wisely concluded, that it was of more importance to do without freedom of action than

<sup>(17)</sup> Cong. xx., decr. 12 ; Cong. xxiii., decr. 40.

<sup>(18)</sup> Litt. Encyc., de lib. hum., p. 34 ; edit. Rom. <sup>(19)</sup> Cepari, p. ii. § 6.



to enjoy it, according to our customs, for the month or for the year.

The Royal Prophet devoutly said of God's testimonies, that is, of His law: "They are the joy of my heart;"<sup>(20)</sup> and St. John frankly says of the observances in the Society: "My joy is in the Rules, the Exercises, and the Lives of our Blessed."<sup>(21)</sup> O truly blest, to have felt no other charms! And what a real good that was to himself, as it does real good to the Society, to have it made known and testified to, that he derived the fruit of all pleasure from the very things, which make up our whole life! These three, the Rules, the Exercises, and the examples of our Blessed, raised him to the height of holiness; and he in his turn adorned the Rules, the Exercises, and his Blessed Models with the glory of his personal sanctity.

Truly, then, do we owe him our highest praise. But remark, that praise of St. John implies praise of them also who were his superiors, both at Mechlin and at Rome. At the period of which we speak, the younger members of the Society were a picked body, and many young men of the Belgian and the Roman provinces were conspicuous for striking talents and the practice of every virtue. Exactness of discipline and vigor of rule knit soul to soul, and kept at a distance all fault-finding and bickering; familiar intercourse with God resulted in making the common life exceedingly happy.

And who will gainsay the fact, that this dwelling, as it were, of heavenly spirits in a vale of tears was in great part, due to the endeavors and labors of superiors, seeing that the source and origin of our happiness are the rules, and that the power of the rules rests with superiors.

The ancients<sup>(22)</sup> used to call the ruler the speaking law, the law itself the silent ruler. Our rules are indeed masters, and they instruct us in the way of all piety and perfection, but they do their work silently. To have them speak to us we

<sup>(20)</sup> Ps. cxviii. III.

<sup>(21)</sup> Cepari, p. ii. § II.

<sup>(22)</sup> Tull. de leg. iii. I.

have further need of superiors. Superiors not only speak by word, but by deed and example; hence the necessity for superiors to be conformable to the rules. They who were placed over St. John were living counterparts of the rules.

Plato reckoned that republics would then be perfect, when the learned and the wise began to govern them, or when they who ruled put all their reliance in knowledge and wisdom.<sup>(23)</sup> True wisdom aims at, and achieves the noblest results: "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding."<sup>(24)</sup>

St. John's superiors were accomplished in this wisdom and, under God's direction, imparted to their subjects the heavenly vigor by which they themselves were actuated.

But when I thus acknowledge the worth of by-gone superiors, let no one think that I have forgotten, how deserving are the many who in our own day have governed, or at present are governing, provinces, colleges and houses. For, in the midst of great vicissitudes, of dangerous times, and of general disorder, they have not been wanting in their duty to themselves or to others, and have aroused the desire of leading a holier life by their acts and their example, by their exhortation and advice. Many have devoted all their time and attention to the service of our brethren; nor have they availed themselves of the liberty, which their position offers them, of satisfying their own tastes or doing what they themselves like.

I often recall to mind those unpleasant labors and those anxieties, which do not suffer so many superiors to enjoy any quiet of mind—so much business, that they have not a day free from solicitude, nor an hour's respite from care.

As I think of all this, I feel for them. Yet do I find consolation in the remembrance of God's promised reward, in the recollection of His invitation to eternal glory extended

(23) Tull. ad Quint. fr., i. 10.

(24) Job, xxviii. 28.

to the faithful servant : " I will place thee over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." <sup>(25)</sup>

I desire that this munificent reward may fall to the lot of all, especially of those who shall be called to the charge and direction of Ours in any capacity ; and for this reason I consider it worth our while to review certain points of our rules, for the proper government of those who belong to the Society.

The first is that which concerns our zeal for heavenly things. Our body and our senses feed on things that are temporal and passing ; but eternal things feed and nourish the soul. And if the care of temporalities calls for men of ability, who will apply themselves steadily to such business, how much more care should be taken in appointing directors of the soul and the conscience, who can fulfil that duty with ability and zeal.

This should be a chief endeavor with superiors. If they be Provincials, they should strive above all to urge their respective provinces forward in the acquisition of virtue, <sup>(26)</sup> and that, not in any fashion, but after the manner prescribed by the spirit of our Institute and our rules. <sup>(27)</sup> For it is in the rearing of the spiritual edifice that their very first care must be exercised.

The second rule for the superior of a professed house, which is also the first among those for a Rector, declares that he must consider it his chief duty to bear, as it were, the burden of the entire community on his own shoulders, by means of prayer and holy desires.

Those who are employed in teaching the higher branches are to strive, with all earnestness, to draw their scholars to the love and service of God and to the practice of virtue. <sup>(28)</sup>

In the lower schools, the teacher, while instructing his pupils in human learning, should at the same time instil into

<sup>(25)</sup> Matth. xxv. 21.

<sup>(26)</sup> Reg. Prov. ii.

<sup>(27)</sup> ib.

<sup>(28)</sup> Reg. comm. omn. prof. sup. facult. i.



their minds sentiments of sound Christian morality.<sup>(29)</sup> This duty of teaching literature and grammar, is of the highest importance ; but far more noble and important<sup>(30)</sup> is that of the spiritual father, since his work is the basis and foundation, whereon the teacher's success will rest.<sup>(31)</sup> It is for this reason that only the most competent should be assigned to the office of spiritual father. The fact that one is little qualified for other employments is no reason why he should be assigned to this. It is a very great error, according to the 10th Instruction, to consider as fitted for this position any one, who has a good intention, and a virtuous inclination, if, at the same time, his solidity of virtue is only moderate, and his prudence likewise.<sup>(32)</sup> On the contrary, they alone should be selected who are distinguished for a love of silence and retirement, as well as for the practice of prayer and divine contemplation.<sup>(33)</sup> Nor should it seem a waste of energy, if, even at the cost of much inconvenience, one is appointed spiritual father, who has been meeting with success in other more brilliant employments. Such a one still labors by the hands of all those, whom he sends forth worthy ministers of the Society.<sup>(34)</sup>

They, however, who are chosen for this office, should engage in those works of the ministry, which, while being more humble, laborious and useful, are less attractive and occupy one less, such as visiting prisons, hospitals, the sick, and preaching short missions. But they should be careful not to have a class of regular penitents ; especially among women, with whom too much time is usually spent.<sup>(35)</sup> For the spiritual father should point out the right spiritual path not only by his teaching and advice, but also by his example and his actions.<sup>(36)</sup> Following these directions, as they stand in the 10th Instruction and the rules of superiors and professors, I conjure the spiritual fathers to consider often, how

<sup>(29)</sup> Reg. comm. prof. class. infer. i.<sup>(30)</sup> Instr. 10, n. 4.<sup>(31)</sup> ib.<sup>(32)</sup> ib. n. 3.<sup>(33)</sup> ib. n. 5.<sup>(34)</sup> ib. n. 6.<sup>(35)</sup> Ib. n. 10.<sup>(36)</sup> ib.

important is the duty which our Lord has entrusted to them, and how much it concerns the well being of the Society, that daily they make themselves better and better fitted for their office, and prove themselves a model to our members. Reverence is due them ; but they will win it effectually, if they show themselves eminently obedient, humble, agreeable to all, as their rules prescribe ; and if they always support the authority of superiors.

In their intercourse with the coadjutor brothers, spiritual fathers should show a kindness, unmixed with any human respect, in urging them on, advising and admonishing them. They should ask of the brothers, no less than of the others under their care, an account of their prayer and of their progress in the virtues which they are practising, especially charity and obedience. They should take the greatest pains to have all esteem the Institute highly ; have them follow the method of prayer prescribed by St. Ignatius, and make themselves familiar with the book of the Exercises. They must guard against the introduction, among Ours, of any form of piety, strange and foreign to the Institute. Let them regularly bear in mind the kind of satisfaction which St. John sought in prayer, not in the sublimity thereof, which appertains to few, and is dangerous to the self-confident, but in the Exercises of our holy Father, in our rules and the lives of the Blessed of our Society.

Mentioning the Spiritual Exercises, I take occasion to remind all that they must be made every year, with all care, and in the house to which one belongs ; or, if this be not possible, in some other house of the Society, where there is a competent spiritual father. On no account is the abuse to be tolerated, if it exists anywhere, of making the Exercises in a house which is not of the Society. Nor can any one be allowed to make them, while he is giving them to persons, who do not belong to the Society. Finally, we absolutely condemn the indiscretion, which should take occasion to make

an annual retreat, in a house which is a monastery indeed, but is not a monastery of men.

What I have said about the Spiritual Exercises, claims the special attention of superiors and spiritual fathers. The welfare of the Society rests on the Spiritual Exercises. If they are not performed according to the mind of St. Ignatius, all that concerns us will only lapse in failure and decay. Truly a dire evil ! The thought of it cannot fail to move any one who bears in mind that he must one day die, and that he knows not the day or the hour. <sup>(87)</sup>

Let us think of this, and withdraw our hearts from the perishable things which surround us, that we may accustom ourselves to the thought of death, and consult our eternal interests. For this, the chief work of life, no time is more favorable than those sacred days which we spend in retreat meditating on the future life.

Would that, like St. John, we found our delight, not in the Exercises only and in the Rules, but also in the lives of the Blessed of our Society ! The Blessed of our Society have been the living Rules ; and they, not others, exhibit the true manner of life of the Society. It is true, we must honor and venerate all the saints of God's Church, nor is it for us to say who among them is more eminent than another. But since God wishes us to follow not any other way of life than that described in our Constitutions, those saints should be considered models for us, who have exemplified that way of life in themselves. Hence, whoever is anxious to acquire the genuine spirit of the Society, will study attentively the lives of Ours who have been distinguished for their sanctity.

This same direction is found also in the rules for the perfect of reading at table, according to which those books should be read which are likely to foster piety. Thus, the 10th rule, after requiring the books to be " examined and approved by the Provincial," declares that " they should be such

<sup>(87)</sup> Cfr. Matth. xxv. 13.



books as will nourish devotion and strengthen the hearers in their own holy vocation." The Provincial, therefore, is instructed to approve those books which serve to strengthen one in the spirit of our own vocation, not any other. Hence books are not to be read which pertain to other Institutes, or which savor of profane subjects.

In the matter of private reading, newspapers are nowhere to be allowed to the young religious of the Society. By newspaper reading, they soon learn how to waste time, become dissipated in mind, and occupied with politics, a thing most foreign to the Society. For this reason, it is a cause of great displeasure to me that newspapers are sent to those scholastics, who are living in another province, whether engaged in studies or in any other occupation. The result of such a practice is, that the same desire of reading useless things is aroused in the houses where these scholastics are, and abuses are thus introduced from one province into another. Since this cannot be tolerated by superiors, I urge and admonish them not to permit such papers to be delivered. Nor let them be influenced by that trite and hackneyed reason which is alleged, that it is necessary to know what is going on in one's own country. For it is not necessary that such knowledge be had by all, who are not students of political science ; nor is it necessary at all times ; nor is such knowledge to be derived from every source. Let the scholastics first of all spend their time in acquiring sound and solid principles, and in habituating themselves to serious matters, which demand a great amount of labor.

Superiors must show themselves still more wakeful and determined in prohibiting the works of fiction, which are circulated in our age. Those loose and sensuous levities should not for a single moment engage the attention of a religious man's mind ; and how much soever their elegance of style recommends these works of fiction, they must be driven far from our houses. It is not our business to deal with things

that are useless ; nor does it become him to go off into follies, or to occupy himself with matters that are worthless, who has been entrusted with the sacred duty of drawing the minds of others away from earthly and perishable things, to those of heaven and eternity.

The very expression of our countenance and that exterior decorum, which we call modesty, intimates and is meant to be a sign that our thoughts are not resting upon the fleeting things of earth, but that we feel ourselves called to things eternal. We have received those golden rules of modesty from one who taught us to despise all things earthly. They were not drawn up by a man who knew nothing of the common life of the world ; but by a man of noble birth, who knew perfectly well by experience, what decorum requires in even a court life, and what is befitting in the first men of a kingdom ; by a man who founded the Society to win back to God our Creator every class of men, the noblest as well as the humblest.

In the remembrance of these rules of modesty, there rises up before our minds that bright, living picture of them, St. John, who often reflected on the labor and tears these rules had cost St. Ignatius, on the earnestness with which he had wished to have them observed, and on their efficacy in presenting an example before men, and commanding respect and love for the Society.

These rules, moreover, help wonderfully in securing religious discipline. For they put us in the habit of composure which conduces to reverence for all rules ; they foster intercourse with God ; they make the soul courageous in the pursuit of virtues, and energetic in acquiring control over self. Also, a similarity of deportment among religious has this other effect, that their minds are less dissimilar, and their wills and purposes do not come mutually into conflict.

Hence the Society owes much to those superiors who take special pains to have Ours show forth, and, I may say, bear

about with them this expression and image of virtue, which we have received from St. Ignatius in the rules of modesty. They who excel in the observance of modesty, seem to be raised above mere human nature, and to partake of a higher order of being. Men of the world respect such religious, and confide in them, both as to matters of life and matters of action; they follow more readily the principles of uprightness and virtue, when they thus see it and feel it and meet with it in its form and beauty shown forth in one's life.

Thus it happens that such as are distinguished for this religious deportment, enhance the fair name of the Society. On the other hand, those who, although consecrated to God, throw aside this religious dignity of look and bearing and conduct are of the kind of men, who, as the Council of Trent says, <sup>(38)</sup> "are divided by a double service, having one foot in things divine, the other in things of the flesh."

And everyone sees how deserving of the contempt of men such conduct is, how unworthy of having our name connected with it, and how disparaging to the majesty of God.

The secret of St. John's consummate modesty is found in his lively sense of the divine presence. He wished also by his modesty to imitate the most Blessed Virgin, and in this way to show his love for her. He was desirous, too, of proving himself grateful to St. Ignatius by this faithful observance, and of comforting his mother, the Society. He wrote down, that a man who shows little concern for the observance of modesty, brings shame, sorrow, and dishonor upon the Society. <sup>(39)</sup> As in every other respect, so, by his fidelity to this virtue, St. John attracted the admiration of everyone. It was a common thing for some to wait for him and see him pass by when he came from school; some placed themselves where they might have a view of him at prayer; nor did any tire of looking at him. <sup>(40)</sup>

<sup>(38)</sup> Trid. sess. xiv. c. 6. rf.

<sup>(39)</sup> Cepari, p. ii. § 7.

<sup>(40)</sup> ib.



By a strict observance, therefore, of his rules, he effected this result, that a living model was visible in him ; and his manner of deportment contained lessons for others to read and live by.

How, then, came it that St. John, who seemed destined for all that was noblest in life, as the Society of Jesus expected of him, was cut off by death, in the flower of his age, when his youth was unfolding with the assured promise of giving such glory to God in the future ?

Why, after so short a span of life, was he at once taken to heaven, when he could have promoted the glory of God so wonderfully, and have brought many to eternal happiness ? It was God's good pleasure, who is " most high over all the earth." <sup>(41)</sup> We should not presume to search or to fathom the counsels of God. One thing is certain that in a short space, St. John fulfilled a long time. <sup>(42)</sup>

It is evident, then, that St. John does honor to the Society not only by his life, but also by his early death. It adds honor and splendor to the Society that he lived in it, but it is a most distinguished honor, that he lived in it only so short a time. For, if he had lived longer, he would have been employed in the apostolic, or other ministry, which is common to us with other Orders. He would then have won his reputation for sanctity by the eminent success of his labors for souls, or by the practice of those virtues for which men in other Institutes become distinguished.

Now, estimable as all these virtues are, it was not in this way that God was pleased St. John should be judged worthy of celestial honors. The divine counsel cut short the youth's most perfect life midway ; and the whole of the life which St. John spent upon earth, was modelled upon our rules. For our Lord was pleased to show that it was by the sole aid of the holy rules which are peculiar to the Society of Jesus, that St. John came to deserve the honor of solemn canonization.

<sup>(41)</sup> Ps. xcvi. 9.

<sup>(42)</sup> Sap. iv. 13.

Wherefore, since that most amiable youth, who lived only the mode of life proper to the Society, was declared a saint because he lived that life most perfectly, it follows that the whole rule of our Institute has been declared holy with John Berchmans. By his early death, besides, Christian youth who are so dear to God, secured a most loving protector ; and after his example, great numbers have preserved their innocence unstained ; and, among them, many have brought that innocence unsullied either into our Society, or into other religious Orders.

God consoled the Society in its sorrow at the death of St. John, by raising up a great man in her midst, a giant I should call him, one who was equal to a multitude. He had already come to Carthagen, and had there began a work of vast proportions, unheard of until then, and entirely in behalf of the most wretched of men ; withal so fruitful, that, under his action and guidance, hundreds of thousands embraced the faith of Jesus Christ.

This admirable man, sharing the glory of St. John, was on the same day and at the same hour, presented to the Christian people as worthy of the homage and veneration given to the saints of God.

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III. As St. Francis Xavier was the Apostle of the Indies, so St. Peter Claver has been justly named the Apostle of the Negroes.

In the Bull of canonization of St. Peter, <sup>(1)</sup> Pope Leo XIII. calls those apostles who have carried the divine light to the wretched, lying in darkness and in the shadow of death. Rightly, then, is the name of apostle given to St. Peter, who

<sup>(1)</sup> Bulla canoniz. B. Petri Claver, Prooem.

has illumined a vast multitude of heathens with the light of the holy gospel.

St. Peter, who became so distinguished among the preachers of the doctrine of heaven, gave promise by his life, even from his earliest years, of what he was destined to become. Even then his love of God and devotion to our Lady were remarkable, as well as his innocence of life. While he was attending the schools of the Society, he soon became prominent among his fellow students for his virtue and talent. As a novice, his virtue shone out conspicuously ; and afterwards, in his years of study, he gave evidence of exalted sanctity and learning.

At this time, St. Peter was thinking of the distant shores of America, and ardently desiring to undertake a work of vast proportions for God's glory. St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, who knew from private revelation the future labors of St. Peter Claver, and the great degree of glory prepared for him in heaven, encouraged him, and foretold the many hardships he was destined to suffer, and the great good he would effect for the souls of men. At last, the Saint obtained permission to gratify his holy desire of devoting his entire life to the conversion of a barbarous people, and he resolved to begin his work after the manner of his patron, St. Francis Xavier. His journey brought him close to his father's house, which he had not visited for many years, and which he would probably never see again ; yet, he resisted the promptings of a warm affection for his father and mother, and would not turn aside to take leave of them. A noble example truly, and one which, even in these days of ours, deserves some imitation from men crucified to the world, and dead to self-love ; men living only to Christ, whom they have in place of parents, brothers and all things else. <sup>(2)</sup>

After his arrival in America, St. Peter remained for a short time in Carthagena, and thence went to Santa Fé de Bogotá,

<sup>(2)</sup> Exam. gen. c. iv. n. 7.



where he was to complete his course of theology. We are told, that, while engaged in study, he devoted his leisure moments to the work of the temporal coadjutors, glorying in the privilege afforded him, of imitating in some sort the labors of the Son of God in the obscurity of the workshop at Nazareth. Indeed, he was so taken with the sweetness of these manual labors, that he afterwards earnestly begged for permission to spend his life in this, the lowliest grade of serving the Society.

He was also employed in these same humble duties, when he was making his tertianship in the novitiate of Thonga. When his third year of probation was completed, he returned to Carthagena, and at length received Holy Orders. He had never asked to have this grace bestowed on him earlier.

Here he was associated with Father de Sandoval, who had just arrived in Carthagena after a long and toilsome journey, all on foot, from Peru. At this time there were in Carthagena three Fathers, who were suffering great destitution. Father de Sandoval, a man of noble birth, and one who had merited excellently of the Society, went about from door to door begging alms for himself and his companions, for the space of three years; and he took upon himself the additional duties of door-keeper, cook and infirmarian. At the same time, he exerted himself so strenuously for the salvation of the negroes, that within seven years, he gained to Christ thirty thousand slaves.

With such a man to prompt him and teach him, St. Peter made all that progress, which his marvellous success in saving souls demonstrated. It is certain that he baptized three hundred thousand negroes; while his companions and interpreters testify that it was a much larger number, as many as four hundred thousand. Yet he did not confine his labors to the care of the negroes, for by his incredible patience and sweetness of manner, he converted many Dutch and English heretics.

The negroes however were his chief care ; for his sympathy was drawn to them by the fact that they were a rude, repulsive and despised race of people, scarcely treated as human beings.

St. Peter's care and labor was more than an apostolate ; it was a real martyrdom. The vastness of his labors and the unending severity of his hardships, surpass human belief.

Constantly before his eyes were the living pictures of direst distress, the mere semblance of human bodies covered with filth, broken down by sickness, wasted with pain. His daily work brought him into places of such infection as would naturally sicken the most robust, or drive off by their loathsomeness the most courageous souls. He was forced to listen to the piteous moanings and heart-rending cries of wretched beings bewailing their hopeless misery.

Yet, his charity was not cooled by the sad spectacle, nor was the constancy of his purpose shaken ; rather his courage was awakened, and his zeal enkindled. As often as this admirable man found a negro more afflicted than the rest, he took occasion to show greater love and compassion for him, proffering his services with as much readiness as if he saw his Lord and Master in the person of this poor slave. Often too, not to say daily, he applied his lips to their horrid wounds.

At times the negroes themselves kept aloof from one another, owing to the reeking odors and the foulness of their sores ; but our saint manifested no signs of disgust. Sometimes the sick became repulsive and loathsome to themselves. They would then beg the saint to leave them, that he might not come into contact with them. But he consoled them with a more tender embrace, and he stayed with the sufferers so much the longer, where none other could remain for an instant. Such heroic acts of this kind did he perform, that if a person underwent spontaneously a single such mortifica-

tion, it would merit for him the praise of sanctity. Yet such acts were perhaps of daily occurrence with him during the space of forty long years.

In a remote situation, a hospital had been erected for those unfortunate sufferers, whose fetid wounds rendered companionship with the other negroes impossible. To these St. Peter gave his first attention ; he consoled them as a friend, kept them from despair, exhorted them to penance for their sins, and instructed them with wonderful patience in the way of salvation.

This task of instructing was one of immense labor and irksomeness, not only when exercised among the sick, but also in the midst of the strong and healthy negroes ; for the progress of the work was greatly retarded by the dulness and inactive temperament of the negroes, the scarcity of interpreters, and their lack of interest, and more especially by the sullenness and insolence of the slave-holders who grudged the daily hour deemed necessary for the proper instruction of their slaves. Oftentimes too the insolence of all alike obstructed his work. The negroes obstinately refused to be instructed ; the interpreters withheld their assistance ; the slave-owners ridiculed the slaves for their piety or broke out into vile blasphemy.

Although St. Peter was greatly esteemed by nearly all with whom he came in contact, yet fault-finders were not wanting. Some thought that his zeal was mere impulsiveness ; others called it imprudence. His bodily macerations were attributed to harshness and severity of disposition ; his love for the negroes was put down as a sort of insanity ; his habit of contemplation was said to be absent-mindedness ; his holiness was derided as self-delusion. Milder critics of this censorious band found fault with the noisy demonstrations of piety among the negroes ; it was a mere ebullition of feeling, they said ; St. Peter was wasting time with men incapable of learning the rules of morality and faith ; they



complained of the many and laborious occupations put upon the interpreters and assistants. If a negro did anything stupid or extravagant, it was all Peter's fault.

The result was, that he was denounced to men in authority, and St. Peter received many sharp reprimands in consequence. Misled by the number of the accusers or the constancy of the complaints or the silence of our saint; not observing the holiness of the missionary, or misjudging the prudence of his course of action, officials thought they were justified in crediting the reports they received. Credulity is rather an error than a vice. Hence it is not strange that it finds place in the minds of even the best-intentioned men.

It also happens, that different estimates are formed by different minds of deeds done for the glory of God. Thus, there were possibly many who thought that the greater glory of God, and more abundant and lasting results could be obtained, if our saint would devote himself to the better educated and the more refined members of the community; and that St. Peter, a man of noble birth, lofty genius and consummate learning, was formed for higher things.

Some feared that the Jesuits' church would be deserted by the educated and the wealthier people. The citizens themselves felt it annoying to meet with negroes, when they came into our church. They blamed the saint's custom of refusing to hear the confessions of any but negroes, so long as there were any of them desiring to confess; that he would not hear any one else, when his services were needed by slaves.

Meanwhile, a Visitor of the province came to Carthagena, and the citizens, who disliked Peter, profited by the opportunity to lay before him their several causes of complaint. Some adding calumny to their accusations, charged the missionary with baptizing persons who had previously received baptism. St. Peter, forbidden on that account to confer bap-

tism any more, obeyed with reverence and humility, and, though his honor and name were at stake, he uttered no word of complaint to his superiors.

In short he endured immense labors, and bore up under excessive trials, to such an extent that it seems miraculous what he accomplished, without ever resting under the incessant strain, which continual hardships intensified.

But it causes greater astonishment when we think of this man, so weighed down with labors and trials, observing meanwhile with extreme fidelity the exact requirements of our rules and Institute. What man ever endured more numerous, or heavier trials, and yet showed himself a closer observer of religious discipline?

He was extremely conscientious in obeying the injunctions of the least of our rules, even when their observance seemed to impede his work; and, although he was wholly devoted to the salvation of souls, and burned with an incredible zeal, yet he made such account of the rules, that when any project, however promising, seemed to prejudice the observance of rule, he not only laid it aside, but rejected the whole plan and all thought of it.

Men who are given to active work yield at times to mere natural impulse and propensities, and therefore are far from being praiseworthy, especially when they make use of the sacred ministry, to free themselves from restraint. But they who revere all the rules as a guide of life given them by Almighty God, and, while employed in the work of saving souls, follow the will and appointment of superiors, are no common instruments of God in procuring the salvation of souls, but they are men of true uprightness and holiness.

In his external work, St. Peter gave proof of every virtue which characterizes an apostle; at home, meanwhile, he was as scrupulously observant of rule, as if he had never left his noviceship. His numerous and wonderful examples of holiness in the internal religious life serve as a model for others.

He was ever ready, at the beck of superiors, to undertake any task however difficult; he made no choice of his own duties or occupations, but was, in all things, pliant to the wish of superiors whom he regarded as the interpreters of God's will.

When ordered, on one occasion, to omit some pious practices which he had instituted for the profit of the negroes, he immediately gave them up. He was told to change his whole method of teaching and instructing the slaves, and he changed it: to drop the work; he dropped it. Abruptly recalled from a journey which he had undertaken for a pious purpose, he came back promptly. The people begged, priests besought him to delay his return until they could send a letter of explanation to his Rector and receive an answer. He disregarded their entreaties, and set out on his journey, no otherwise than if he had heard the voice of God. So too, when he was appointed Minister of the college, he immediately relinquished his cherished work among the negroes, and gave himself up to this duty, quite unexpected as it was. He had a boundless desire to obey, so that, when absent from home, he wanted to be under the orders of his companion, or of some extern.

The following incident is related of St. Peter, when he was appointed to attend the sick, in Saint Sebastian's Hospital. After saying Mass, and hearing the confessions of a number of the patients, he engaged in sweeping the rooms, and there was no kind of service, however menial and abject, for which he showed any aversion. But all this he did by direction of the superior, who was of the Order of St. John of God. While thus occupied, he was called to hear the confession of one who was dying; but he did not go, without permission from the same superior.

Charity towards our equals, reverence for those who are above us in dignity, win for us the confidence of others, and



inspire great respect for our Society. These virtues are worthy of our name, and suited to the labors we perform for our Lord and Master. St. Peter, as a worthy son of the Society of Jesus, gave an example of charity and reverence, truly in accord with our Constitutions.

For we have our holy Father's precept, that "the love and good-will of every one should be preserved towards our Society, especially of those who have it in their power to promote or hinder the glory of God and the help of souls." <sup>(3)</sup>

And our rules give us this warning, that, "when we come into those places where the Ordinaries reside, we should go to them and humbly proffer our services; that we should all try to gain the good-will of ecclesiastics, especially of those who have the cure of souls; <sup>(4)</sup> that, through a feeling of reverence and respect, we should beware of even tacitly censuring religious of other Orders." <sup>(5)</sup>

It is also the desire of our holy Father St. Ignatius, that "we be prudent and moderate in the use of the privileges which have been granted to us by the Apostolic See." <sup>(6)</sup> For it is evident that too free a use of such privileges, or any boasting about them, gives cause for jealousy or reproof.

St. Francis Xavier has with equal wisdom and earnestness written much on this subject of the respect due to men in authority.

Thus, for instance, he seriously enjoins upon John Rodriguez the duty of obeying the Bishop's Vicar. "One thing I enjoin upon you absolutely, to be very obedient to the Bishop's Vicar; and observe that this is not my advice only, but my order. You are forbidden, in virtue of holy obedience, to disagree with the Vicar for any cause whatever, or ever to have any quarrel with him. . . You must show great veneration and respect to the other priests; carefully avoid every-

<sup>(3)</sup> Const. p. x. n. 11.

<sup>(4)</sup> Reg. miss. vii.

<sup>(5)</sup> Reg. concionat. xiii.

<sup>(6)</sup> Const. p. x. n. 12.

thing that might seem disrespectful to them, or that might savor of contempt. Make them all your friends ; set them an example of perfect obedience to the Vicar ; thus in imitation of their priests, the whole people will learn to pay that full and entire obedience which they owe to their pastor, the Vicar. I would have you estimate so highly the fruit of such an example, as to be convinced that, by being the first to show this example of humility and obedience, you will do them much more good than by preaching." <sup>(7)</sup>

In this same letter, the saint takes Fr. John to task even more severely : " So much am I convinced that the interests of God's greater glory require you to show perfect submission and obedience to the Vicar, that I order you, in virtue of holy obedience, as soon as you receive this letter with this injunction, to go and kneel down before him, and humbly implore him to forgive you all the acts of disobedience and other faults by which you have grieved him up to this time. You must then kiss his hand, declaring that you do so by my orders. Then you will listen to whatever he wishes you to do, and you will execute obediently whatever he shall require. For all this must be done, in order to confound the malice of the devil, the father of discord and disobedience." Besides these directions, our saint adds one more just before closing his letter : " You must show this letter to the Bishop's Vicar." (ib.)

The Apostle of the Indies is quite as vigorous in dealing with Fr. Alphonsus Cipriani, whom he calls to account in the following terms : " You must know that I have been displeased beyond belief by the rudeness and discourtesy with which I hear you have behaved. If the Vicar does not act as he ought, most certainly he will not be taught better by reproofs from you, especially when they are obtruded on him so imprudently, as yours have been. You have been so long accustomed never to cross your own will in anything, that, wherever you are, you offend every one, and give exhibi-

<sup>(7)</sup> Epist. S. Franc. Xav. xi. Kal. April, 1552.

tions, to all who deal with you, of your intractable and harsh disposition. God grant that one day you may seriously repent of these imprudent acts." <sup>(8)</sup>

No one knew the mind of St. Ignatius better than did the Apostle of the Indies; and no one, I venture to say, has inculcated in severer terms the need of this spirit of charity and reverence, to which I have referred.

The twelfth General Congregation adopted the same tone of severity, and, in the same sense, drew up its nineteenth decree. This decree suggests to me the propriety of recalling to your minds how justly our rules direct that action should be taken against him who, either by word of mouth or by writing, gives offence to any one. Either way of giving offence is wrong enough, and altogether opposed to that spirit of courtesy and self-control so befitting a religious man; but the fault is especially odious, when it is in writing that we impeach or bitterly criticise any one. For this method of rebuke offends many; and it is not easily forgotten.

It was owing to such considerations as these that the Fathers of the Congregation just mentioned, drew up, at the instance of Rev. Fr. General Charles de Noyelle, the following decree: "If it happen that any of Ours, either by word or in writing, or in any other way, offend any externs, but especially religious or persons in high stations, or gives them any just cause of complaint, let superiors in the first place diligently inquire into the case, and treat the offender with due severity, and let them leave nothing of the kind unpunished. In the next place, let them take care that due satisfaction is made as soon as possible to those who may justly consider themselves injured. . . . And consultors are bound to give notice to mediate superiors if any one has offended in this matter, and if any penances were enjoined, and to what extent." <sup>(9)</sup> I, for my part, have always made much account of our writers, and I know how very difficult their

<sup>(8)</sup> *ib.*, Apr. 1552.

<sup>(9)</sup> Congr. xii, decr. 9.



duty is. It is evident that theirs is one of those important works of the Society which, when carried out in the proper manner, contribute in no ordinary degree to the glory of God, to the salvation of souls and to the credit and good repute of the Society. For centuries the writings of our Fathers stand like monuments, filled with that learning which even to-day sheds light and splendor over the whole Society. I would not have this glory fade away or be even dimmed; and, since it has been so determined by the Society, it is my duty to urge that, in this matter of writing, nothing be done with levity or imprudence, with inconsiderateness or harshness. Nay, with a dispassionate mind, with great prudence and dignity, rather than by violent attack, must we do battle for the cause of truth and justice.

Thank God, in adopting this method of procedure, we have no lack of shining examples set before us. For there are eminent writers who have flourished in our age, or are yet in their prime, who deserve well of the Society; who never lose their self-control, never injure any one, and who, if compelled to ward off any attack, do so with such calmness of mind and moderation, that their very style of itself seems to have the effect of quieting the controversy. Hence it is that we grieve all the more bitterly, when now and then matters which were moving on prosperously, owing to the wise moderation of these writers, are put back or completely upset by the inconsiderate imprudence and rashness of a single writer. If it happens that, on this account, entrance is denied the Society into any place or country whatever, who will make good the immense loss to souls that must consequently follow?

Forecasting such an evil as this, St. Ignatius urges the necessity of preserving in the Society "a certain universal charity,"<sup>(10)</sup> and he wishes us to have a special regard for those who can most promote or hinder the service of God and the help of souls.<sup>(11)</sup> We must advance the glory of

<sup>(10)</sup> Const. part. x. n. 11.

<sup>(11)</sup> *ib.*

God, not only in the place where we happen to be living, but as far as possible in every part of the world. For the spirit of the sons of the Society is magnanimous and noble, and is not bounded by any narrow confines. Consequently, our writers must be thoroughly on their guard, so as not to work havoc in one region while trying to be of benefit to another. The Society has houses in many lands, and is subject to many governments, and is exposed to the power and arbitrary will of many men ; and writings, which might be put forth with impunity in one region, could not without great risk and peril be issued in another.

It is a bad example to carp publicly at those who are in control of the public administration of affairs. This, writes St. Ignatius, "gives rise to losses and to scandals ;" and there follows "murmuring on the part of the people against their rulers and their pastors, when anyone talks against these superiors either in public discourse or in familiar conversation." <sup>(12)</sup> How much greater harm is done, when rulers or pastors are assailed in print ! For, whilst words spoken take wings and are gone, the written words remain, and are so many arguments capable of making us hateful and odious, not only to our contemporaries, but also to posterity.

The fact that a person was perfect of health seemed to St. Peter reason enough to show respect for him, and to pay him obedience. From this it is easy to judge, what was his bearing towards those charged with the office of government in Church or state.

Moreover, at all times he so accommodated himself to the will of his superiors in the Society, that he carried out with joy and alacrity their most difficult commands ; and, even when his reputation seemed to be at stake, he was always ready at the nod and beck of his superiors. He was the admiration of all, and was ever doing things which were new and extraordinary. As things of this kind easily suggest

<sup>(12)</sup> Regulæ ut cum orth. eccl. sentiamus ; Cfr. Reg. Concionat, 12,

the possibility of delusion, the Rector of the college deemed it his duty to test the virtue of our saint, as often as an opportunity presented itself.

Consequently, on more than one occasion, he was undeservedly censured and had to endure many a reproof, all of which he accepted with the greatest peace of mind, and with joy. For this servant of God, who let no day pass by without giving proofs of his heroic charity and self-contempt, was only desirous of being found fault with, and reprehended in the presence of all.

Indeed in this respect he had laid down the severest regulations for himself. He was of opinion that a truly humble man acts so as to appear really deserving of contempt, and wishes all men to neglect, despise and think ill of him, and at the same time is persuaded that he endures all this treatment, not out of any love of virtue, but because he is low-minded, mean-spirited and of a craven disposition. Hence, he used to say, when we are despised we must be anxious to appear ashamed, dejected and utterly cast down.

Being ordered on one occasion, after he had received some reprehension, to go down on his knees and remain there, till permission was given him to rise, he promptly obeyed, and remained kneeling till his superior signified that his punishment was at an end.

At another time, he had occasion whilst he was prefect of the church to rebuke a lady, on account of the unseemly dress in which she dared to appear in so holy a place. She flew into a passion, began to cry out with vehemence, protesting that she had been insulted. Attracted by the cries and stormy complaints of the woman, the sacristan ran to the spot, followed almost immediately by the Rector himself, who, thinking that Peter had been acting imprudently, reprimanded him there and then. The insolent woman triumphed, while the holy man, throwing himself on his knees before his superior, begged for pardon and a penance. No thought



seemed ever to rise in his mind about losing his honor, or suffering disgrace. He was fully persuaded that a man in religion covers himself with infamy by showing pride and contumacy, not by practising humility and obedience.

On the other hand, he always said that obedience was the shortest road to that perfection, in which is our praise and glory. He aimed at this perfection by obeying, not his superiors only, but also our rules, to such an extent that he never wanted to be freed from the bonds of religious discipline, or to admit any exemption from the burdens of common life, not even from those which seemed to interfere with his holy labors.

When letters were brought to him, he could not bear to have them given to him unopened, out of respect for the rule which directs that letters shall be delivered, only after they have been read. He had a much greater dread, as was natural, of sending letters which he had not first shown to his superior.

He was once ordered by the Father General to give a letter to a certain Father, but, as he could not hand it over in charge of the Rector of the house, he delivered it to the Provincial.

Wonderful indeed is the record of his diligence, fidelity and religious exactness, in obeying the rule which forbids Ours to be out of the house without a companion. This man mixed up in affairs of such great moment, and in business which forced him to be often out of doors, took care at all times to have a witness of his actions; nor did he ever lay claim to that liberty, on this point, which other men, less truly religious, would have deemed necessary for their work in the salvation of souls. He gave instruction to the negroes; a companion was present all the time; he attended the sick; there too with him was his companion; at times he had his interpreter as companion, and besides him, a coadjutor brother also. Leaving Carthagena, he set out for Bogotá, and a

scholastic accompanied him on his journey ; being requested to hear confessions in the house of the military commandant, he consented to hear the penitents, only where he could be seen by his companion. It is related of a scholastic, that his reason received a shock at the mere sight of the sores, and at the foulness which he encountered, when companion to St. Peter in visiting the stricken negroes. In the houses of the nobility, he more than once feigned ignorance, or want of skill in preaching, and this to give his companion the opportunity of preaching. Those who have written with any detail about this servant of God, are so uniform in mentioning this constant presence of the companion, that it is quite clear he had a horror of going out of our house, or of delaying in any other house, without such a witness.

Yet it was most difficult for him to observe this rule. He had frequently to leave the house and give his services to the negroes, to those outside the pale of the Church, or to the Mahometans themselves. Several in succession had to take their turn as companions, for in such a burning climate, no single one of them could endure the heat so long as St. Peter bore it. Some also went with him reluctantly, partly because of their own excessive labors, partly because their nature rebelled. God allowed all this to happen, that we may see how saints value this rule of ours, and with what spirit they overcome every difficulty that stands in the way of its observance.

St. Peter, desirous to be most faithful in the observance of so grave a rule, made an agreement with those of the lay brothers, whose work prevented them from serving him as companions, to do a part of their work himself, whilst they on their part thus gained time, and accompanied him.<sup>(13)</sup> Truly, in the minds of the saints is implanted that spirit of fidelity, which comes of a lofty soul ; and St. Peter reaped

<sup>(13)</sup> C. van Aken, *Vie de S. Pierre Claver*, l. ii., chap. 4.

its amplest reward, together with immense fruit to souls and increase of the divine glory.

His superiors were convinced that his wonderful zeal for souls confirmed the truth of what St. Ignatius says, concerning solid virtue and the pursuit of spiritual things: "These are the interior things from which grace must flow to the exterior for the end proposed to us."<sup>(14)</sup> Accordingly, they deemed that Ours should be imbued with the spirit of this holy man, and that he should on this account be called away, for awhile at least, from his actual work, however abundant its fruits were. "For in very truth," as we read in the tenth Instruction, sixth paragraph, he who has formed others, "works through the hands of all those, who, instructed by him, show themselves fit workmen of the Society." At the earnest request, therefore, of the Rector, Peter was appointed Minister of the college.

This office is indeed a most important one. For it is the Minister's duty to uphold and maintain the Constitutions, the rules and approved customs, since it is from these that regularity proceeds, which is so pleasing to our Lord God. His chief task is to promote the spirit of union among all, and to foster the spirit of obedience due to the superior of the whole house. The Minister is charged with the care of having the rule of enclosure observed, the rule of silence and that of cleanliness—three requisites by which we recognize that a house is well ordered. It is his business to see that these points are attended to, and that our houses give evidence of order, of quiet, and decorum, and thus represent the holy house of Nazareth. In like manner, it is the function of the Minister to provide what is necessary in the way of food and lodging. If these are properly attended to, he can with more confidence give orders, concerning the discipline of the house.

He should be extremely careful of all that relates to poverty, lest anything be in the house which is regarded as pri-

<sup>(14)</sup> Const. p. x. n. 2.



vate property, or is precious, or superfluous. But, what I may designate as of the very first importance, the Minister ought to remain at home, so as to be on hand in the service of Ours, with respect to permissions, or the necessities of life.

For, surely, that superior does not satisfy the obligations of his office, nor carry out the divine will, who withdraws from his community, in order to lavish his zeal, and bestow his time and labor on people outside. "The order of charity," writes St. Francis Xavier, "requires us to give our care first to persons of our own community and then to externs . . . I am deeply assured that all this counsel is of the utmost importance; and that those who are content with a general satisfactory appearance in the eyes of men, and have no care to be pleasing in the sight of God, are no better than those others, who simply seek the favor of the town, falsely thinking they have fulfilled their duty, when, in reality, they have neglected its first and principal obligation, in order to devote their energies, in defiance of right order, to secondary and accessory works. Those who act thus are entirely in error."<sup>(15)</sup>

Now St. Peter conducted himself, in the discharge of his office, so as to fulfil most carefully all the duties of a most vigilant Minister. If ever a man inflamed with zeal for souls made much of this office it was certainly he, to whom such a charge was quite unfamiliar. Wholly intent on all that might further the interests of the college, or help to the well-being of the community, he was ever on the alert, he let nothing escape, and he looked to the least details about the house. Dear to God and to man, he satisfied all so fully, that those who dwelt in the college, while he was Minister, lived cheerfully and religiously.

The necessities of the case, however, called for his return to the ministry among the negroes. Therefore, when he was ordered to resume his former work, to which he had so entirely devoted himself, he returned to it with a heart full of

<sup>(15)</sup> Epist. ad P. Gasp. Barzæum, Apr. 1552.

divine charity ; and in this holy ministry he spent the remaining years of his admirable life.

I have enumerated very many of the heroic deeds of this great servant of God, and I have selected them from those authors whose fidelity and discrimination, in matters of this kind, are well approved. Yet I feel I have touched upon but very few of the striking points in his life, if I compare them with the rest which I have passed over in silence, so as not to be unreasonably long.

I have said nothing of the wonderful and altogether singular care with which he devoted himself to the lepers. He lightened their misery by the greatness of his love for them, he instructed them in the knowledge of divine things and, by a singular miracle, healed these wretched outcasts by touching them with his cloak.

I have passed over in silence the assistance he rendered to those who were condemned to death. He is said to have been present, when at times as many as thirty malefactors were put to death together.

Devoting himself also to the conversion of the Mahometans, he so far overcame their obstinacy that they laid aside their obstinate disposition, and, of those living at Carthage, there was hardly one who did not abandon his errors.

Concerning his penances, I have said but little. The sworn enemy of pleasures, he yielded to his senses in nothing, he treated himself with indulgence in nothing. During the four and fifty years he spent in the Society, never, unless forced to do so, did he allow his eyes a glance at anything, in which even the most innocent might have taken pleasure. In spite of the scorching heat of the sun, he was never seen quenching his thirst, or taking any refreshment, except at the hour designated for all. Whilst he was minister, he asked the cook on several occasions to give him some food, which had been thrown aside as unfit for use. The very taste of it caused another who tried it to reject it at once. And no

wonder, for the food contained a dead spider. Often he had no food at all. Not unfrequently, returning in the evening, worn out after a missionary journey, he found nothing to eat. But, though he had not tasted a morsel all day, he bore this silently and cheerfully, and would not allow it to come to the notice of superiors, that he had been the whole day without food.

Owing to overwork and the strain on his voice, he often fainted with exhaustion in the church, and had to be carried to his room. When he recovered, he scourged himself to blood. He was accustomed to make use of this most severe penance, three times every night. When alone he wore a crown of thorns upon his head. Covered with a hair shirt and bound with chains, he could scarcely advance a step without intense pain. Whatever position of body he took, whether sitting or praying, he ever found some ingenious device for annoying or torturing his body, nor did he ever allow an hour to pass without some mortification.

God showered His favors on His faithful servant who fought so bravely under the standard of the cross. He enriched him with singular gifts of grace, and multiplied in a wonderful way the fruits of his toil.

But our saint by the continual exercise of prayer, by the observance of rules, by his charity, and a practice of penance the very thought of which causes a shudder, has taught us this lesson, that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and that not the slothful man, not the man who spares himself, or who yields to his own inclinations and his love of freedom, will ever take it by force, but he that is violent, he that uses force and makes every effort, however reluctant nature may show itself.

We are unable to reproduce, in our own every day life, the heroic deeds of St. Peter ; they are beyond mere human endeavor. May we, at least, have the courage and nerve to imitate them, and outline them so far, as bearing the burden



of our rules requires. Certainly, if we recall the toil, and weariness, and hardships which this great servant of God underwent, our Constitutions will appear less exacting: if we weigh these things, we shall not find it hard to bear the restraints of poverty, nor the discomforts of common life, nor the bonds of obedience. Quite otherwise; we shall account ourselves to have done but little, even when we have been earnest and solicitous in observing all that the rules enjoin.

For we have devoted our lives and labors to the Lord, most high and eternal. "The Lord will give grace and glory."<sup>(16)</sup> And oh, what glory! St. Alphonsus once saw a most brilliant halo prepared for St. Peter in the home of the Blessed. And that eternal halo and glory became his when, far from his native land, he gave up his soul at Carthagera, in the midst of a barbarous population.

When listening to the words of St. Alphonsus: "He who knows not how to suffer, knows not how to love," he had sought out the place and the way for enduring the direst sufferings. The way had been already pointed out by the holy brother, who used to say: "How many souls are rushing to their eternal ruin, because they have no one to help them! How many men there are leading a life of ease in Europe, who would be apostles in America!" So said the holy brother. Already, in the year 1554, the Apostle of the Indies had written: "It often comes to my mind to go round all the universities of Europe, and especially that of Paris, crying out everywhere like a madman, and saying to all the learned men there, whose learning is so much greater than their charity: Ah! what a multitude of souls are, through your fault, shut out of heaven and falling into hell!" Reflecting on all this, and carried away with the most noble desire of saving men, he entered upon the toilsome journey of suffering, and persevered therein with incredible constancy, taking upon himself unspeakable labors, sufferings and hardships.

(16) Ps. lxxxiii. 12.

There are some who appropriate to themselves the name of apostles, and surround their works with the halo of an apostleship, while they pass their days pleasantly in an employment that is agreeable. There are others again in our missions abroad, who spend their lives in the greatest toil, and endure constantly heat and cold, as well as hunger and thirst. There are men who undertake long journeys on foot, often fording rivers, sleeping out under the open sky and exposed to the fury of wild beasts, men who dwell in the midst of a barbarous people without any comfort whatsoever, and yet who eagerly seek for such a life, who value it dearly, and who would never allow anything but the voice of obedience to withdraw them from that life of hardships. Such men as these I behold with admiration, I bless them from my heart, and I sincerely congratulate our Society which can claim them as her sons. And when tidings reach me of Ours who have devoted their lives to the missions, some in the flower of their age, some in the vigor of their manhood, when I hear the entreaties of men, begging to be sent to share the toil and to support the failing strength of those still surviving, and yet am unable to grant so just a request, I am filled with sadness and grief.

Nor does any blame attach to those entrusted with the guidance of the provinces. For the most part they are generous, some even beyond their means. Still when I see no way of helping our brothers owing to the number of houses in Europe, I sometimes exclaim : Why do we not abandon houses, which afford us no sure ground of hope for a college, houses which are rather a source of odium than of fruit, and wherein the work corresponding to our Institute is so far wanting, that it must be anxiously ferreted out ?

God seems to have bestowed upon St. Peter the highest glory, even here on earth, in order that we may imitate his example, not in words merely but in apostolic deeds, and may have the courage to help those who, having no one to

aid them, call upon us to lend them a helping hand, and save them from endless woe.

With us, the missions should certainly hold the very first place along with the colleges. And if our number is smaller than is required to carry on our work, a burning love of God should make up for the deficiency. If our preachers are animated with divine love, one will be as good as a host. And St. Peter, was he not equal to a great army? A man worthy in truth, of all admiration, one on whom we can never bestow any praise equal to his deserts! But the Lord, most high, has exalted him, and, through His Vicar on earth, has enrolled the name of Peter in the calendar of the saints.

Associated with him, as companions of his glory and beatitude, are his former director in the things of God, and the innocent youth, the renown of whose sanctity, we may well believe, had reached him. Prostrate before their altars and holy images, we humbly venerate the three saints, Peter, John and Alphonsus, to whose guardianship we have entrusted ourselves with joy, strengthened with the hope that we shall follow in the footsteps of such great servants of God, and be made partakers in their glory.

When St. Benedict had breathed forth his holy soul, a voice was heard saying: "This is the way whereby Benedict, the beloved of the Lord, ascended into heaven." In like manner do our saints point out to us the way that leads to our heavenly country. This way they have shown, is no other than that of our Constitutions. Our rules are the same as theirs; we are bound to God by the same vows and promises; one thing only is required of us, and that is, to be animated with the same spirit. Ours are disposed to observe the rules; nay, oftentimes even to a remarkable degree. And yet the Society does not seem to have the same form and appearance, so to speak, everywhere, not even in those places where there is nothing to prevent the strictest observance of the Institute. Whence this diversity? It comes, I believe,

from the different degrees of understanding which prevails regarding what is prescribed us.

For some there are who have but an imperfect knowledge of the Constitutions. Others, again, know them well, but weigh not sufficiently their efficacy and importance, deeming it enough if they follow the customs of those who have gone before them. But, since everyone should persuade himself that what is enjoined upon us is "the precept and will of God," it is not admissible to remain in ignorance of such precepts, or to regard them as of little moment.

Wherefore, I beseech, exhort, and admonish the Fathers who are in the third year of probation, to bestow all care and diligence upon the understanding of our holy Institute.

For it ill becomes us to be ignorant of those things which contain the whole manner and meaning of our life. Nor are the evils which flow from this ignorance to be looked upon as slight. For, as this want of knowledge is an internal evil and a domestic one, it attacks the Society in what is most vital. It is a hindrance to order, charity, and obedience. To it are to be ascribed the frequent violations of the rules, the dearth of competent superiors, and the vacillating manner in which commands and prohibitions are issued. Moreover, many an order is given on the impulse of one's own good pleasure and wish, or for the sake of pleasing externs, which is far from the mind of our holy Father Ignatius. There are also other evils which flow from the same source. Love for the Society grows cold, the strictness of the rules is relaxed and lost, each one interprets them to his own liking; and last, and most pernicious of all, from this ignorance false principles take their rise and spread everywhere.

In this class is to be placed the opinion that we should devote ourselves to anything that promises to be fruitful. Well, the Episcopal dignity offers the hope of most abundant fruit. And yet St. Ignatius would have it regarded as foreign to the Society; and he determined that those whose virtue and talent fitted them above others for this dignity, should be de-



barred from it by the sanction of a vow. Nor in a matter of such importance did he hesitate to make his mind known even to the first Princes in Christendom.

To Ferdinand, King of the Romans, he wrote as follows : "I am so fully persuaded that honors and dignities are a hindrance to us, that I do not hesitate to say, in the most absolute manner and with perfect assurance, that no more certain means for the ruin of our Order could be thought of, than the acceptance of bishoprics." (Dec. 1546.) And, when St. Francis Borgia was to be made a member of the College of Cardinals, nine times did our holy Father go to the Sovereign Pontiff to try to ward off that dignity. It was, however, only after many prayers, penances, and tears, that he obtained from God the deliverance of the Society from so great a danger.

The regular cure of souls can never be called fruitless ; and yet, though there are men in the Society who might undertake such charge with credit to themselves, our Fathers have been forbidden to take it upon themselves ; and, for many years past, Provincials have been endeavoring with praiseworthy zeal to get rid of parishes. On this point there is a Constitution drawn up by our holy Father himself.<sup>(17)</sup>

The same Constitution disapproves of the direction of religious women, though it cannot be denied that many of Ours are well fitted for the task. St. Ignatius forbade us to have the ordinary charge of them ; and the Fathers of the seventh General Congregation called it "an evil," and one which was ever regarded as "most foreign" to the Institute of the Society, an evil that was "to be vigorously withstood" at the very outset, and for which remedies should be sought for "at once effective and infallible."

I quote the words of the fifty-sixth decree : "Whereas the Congregation was requested to provide some efficacious remedy, and prevent Ours from gradually becoming occupied and distracted with the direction of women, who live together

<sup>(17)</sup> Const. p. vi. c. 3, n. 5.

in certain houses and under certain rules ; it was resolved to meet this evil firmly at the very outset : since any charge whatsoever of such persons seems to militate against the Constitutions . . . and is exposed to no uncommon dangers, and to slander from many tongues ; especially since this ministry has always been regarded as most foreign to the Institute of the Society and to its duties. Wherefore it was decreed that all superiors be admonished to keep aloof from the direction and spiritual advancement of these women, and, under no pretext whatever, to allow any of their subjects to enter into their affairs . . . And the Congregation further requested our Reverend Father General . . . to keep a most zealous watch against this evil, and to apply whatever remedies he might judge to be at once powerful and infallible."

Therefore, there is question here not of religious sisterhoods only, but of all women who live in community, and are bound together under a fixed rule. The General Congregations expressly declare that any charge over these women is plainly incompatible with the Constitutions.

This same Congregation teaches us that the dangers attending this work are no ordinary ones. All superiors should abstain from having anything whatever to do with the government and spiritual direction of these souls.

No one is allowed, under any pretext, to identify himself with the interests of these women. Wherefore, Ours are forbidden to assist them in the establishment of their institutions, to draw up rules for them, to act as their superiors ; for these are their interests, their highest and most important ones ; and we are forbidden to entangle ourselves in their interests.

The General would be wanting in his duty, if he connived at any offence in this matter, and so he must be ever watchful ; and, because this charge and care is such an evil, he must prevent the evil vigorously at its very origin, and apply the remedies which are most efficacious and infallible.

Such a course of action is his bounden duty ; for what has been sanctioned by General Congregations is a law.

What we may undertake, and how far we may go, in this matter of the direction of women, has been defined precisely by St. Ignatius, and by the 20th General Congregation. What our holy Father has decreed is found in the 6th part of the Constitutions. <sup>(18)</sup> These are his words : " In like manner, since men of this Society must be ever ready to go to any part of the world, whither they may be sent by the Pope, or by their superiors, they must not take upon themselves the care or spiritual direction of religious women or any other women whatsoever, so as to be their ordinary confessors, or act as their superiors ; although they may, for special reasons, hear once the confessions of one convent."

I shall now quote, as it is in the Institute, what the 20th Congregation has decreed : " By the 9th paragraph of the 12th decree, the Congregation (I quote the words) ordained that no one of Ours, unless he be mature in years, and if possible, of a certain determined age, be permitted to frequent convents of women or female academies ; and those, who are allowed to go, must not go for any other reason, than to give the Spiritual Exercises or to be extraordinary confessors. . . .

" An exception was raised against that provision of the decree, which forbids Ours to go to the convents of nuns, and to female academies, except for the purpose of giving retreats or being extraordinary confessors ; and it was urged that it was morally impracticable, at least in many places, to carry out this decree. After carefully considering the reasons which were brought forward, the Congregation saw fit to add the following modification : that ' if, in some places, Ours cannot avoid going frequently to the aforesaid convents and academies, still they must not do so except for grave and solid reasons, and with the special permission of superiors.' "

The 23rd Congregation, after carefully weighing the same question in four different sessions, drew up its 40th decree,

<sup>(18)</sup> Ch. iii. n. 5.

which I now quote for you in the words of the Congregation itself. "When many discussions of the Congregation had been taken up with the question of directing religious women, and much had been said on both sides, the Congregation at length resolved that no new decree was necessary in this matter, but what we should abide by the Constitution of our holy Father and the decrees of former Congregations."

No one will be surprised at the rigor of this law, if he recall to mind that the priests of the Society of Jesus were forbidden by Papal authority, "to take upon themselves," so the Sovereign Pontiff speaks, "the spiritual direction of any body of women, since such an occupation was seen to be opposed to the Institute of the Society."<sup>(19)</sup>

Thus speaks Benedict XIV. ; and the same Pontiff, after proclaiming it a necessary consequence of the statutes of the Council of Trent<sup>(20)</sup> that "no one was allowed to enter convents, or to visit religious women, but by order of the Bishop," ratified the same, adding these words : "it is our positive will that the statutes be fully confirmed, and, if there be need, though we think there is not, we sanction them by a new law."<sup>(21)</sup>

It is evident then from all this, that both our lawgiver, St. Ignatius, and the General Congregations acted according to the mind of holy Church, when they framed the laws in this sense, upon the present question. And our holy Father spoke his mind in this matter by an example also.

The Duke of Ferrara had taken steps to found a college for the Society. He was a man of great wealth and influence, and was the patron of a convent of nuns ; and this, on account of their own solid virtues, but especially because his mother had established that religious community. The Duke

<sup>(19)</sup> Const. "Quamvis justo," prid. Kal. Maii, 1749.

<sup>(20)</sup> Trid. sess. xxv. De Regul. et Monial, c. 5. rf.

<sup>(21)</sup> Epist. Encycl. "Gravissimo, qua prohibetur, ne quis, etiam exemptus et Ecclesiastica dignitate præfulgens, ad monasteria monialium accedat sine Ordinarii loci licentia." Cp. Ben. XIV., de syn. diœc., l. xiii. c. 12, n. 23.



asked it as a favor of St. Ignatius that some of Ours might be allowed to take charge of affairs in the convent only for a few days.<sup>(22)</sup> But all his prayers were powerless to obtain that any one of Ours should be put in charge of those religious women, even for so very short a time.<sup>(23)</sup> St. Ignatius was immovable on that point. Now, if the father was immovable, it is becoming that the genuine sons should be so too.

This admirable firmness of St. Ignatius indicates to us the importance of the matter, and the error of those who think perhaps that this direction of women, living in community under certain rules, is not opposed to our Institute, if the charge is not that of the ordinary authority, or if we still are free to resign it when we choose.

They labor under a like delusion who imagine that the rule about having a companion, is one which originates in distrust, that it interferes with the glory of God, that it does not suit our times or manners.

With regard to the first objection, we must comply with that rule of our holy Founder, which directs us, that, when another's mind is not clear, we should be more inclined to put a favorable interpretation upon it, than to condemn it.<sup>(24)</sup> Much more does this principle apply, when there is question of a law, which was made by men of the highest authority, which has been observed by no insignificant body of the Society for two centuries at least, and has always been highly esteemed by men of acknowledged wisdom and virtue. If therefore the weight of grave reasons commend the rule, the sanctioning of it may well be attributed to these reasons, rather than to suspicions. The Society held that the rule was not the offspring of suspicion, but that it was prompted by the spirit of God. As for the rest, "it is the part of a prudent man," as the golden letter on obedience has it, "not

<sup>(22)</sup> The original is "aliquot tantum dierum." The Roman translation for the expression is: "per alcuni pochi giorni (1860)." A recent translator uses the words: pour quelque "temps." Fr. Ribadeneira has: para que algunos "dias" tuviesen cargo.

<sup>(23)</sup> Ribadeneira, vida del P. B. Ignac. de Loy. l. iii. c. 14.; vers. ital. c. 13,

<sup>(24)</sup> Exerc. Spir. S. P. Ign., editio Namurc. alt. p. 24.

to trust his own wisdom." (25) For my own part, I confess that I am moved by a distrust, not of my brothers, but of myself; and for that reason I never go out without a companion.

But the rule implies dignity. Fr. Natalis tells us that "priests do not go out alone on account of propriety." (26) The same authority tells of St. Ignatius, that "he never sent a priest alone to hear confessions outside of one of our churches, nor alone to preach, nor to assist the dying." (27) Those who are distinguished by birth or office usually go out attended. What distinction is higher than to have devoted oneself to God in a religious institute?

The second objection, that this rule is an obstacle to furthering the glory of God, is devoid of reason. Fidelity and zeal for our rules can in no way prejudice an object so holy. It is the observance of them, not their neglect, that wins for us the love and grace of our Highest Good. And without this help of God what are we? what do we do that is of any use for the salvation of men? St. Peter never once ventured to put his foot outside the house, without a companion. And was this faith of his, this religious reverence, an obstacle to his winning souls? If one, neglecting this rule of the companion, shall have won to Christ a hundred thousand idolaters, whom he could not have saved by having a companion, he perhaps will be allowed to find fault with this rule.

To the third objection, that this rule of ours is not in keeping with the spirit of the times, it is my opinion that it rests with ourselves to strive together, and make it be in keeping with the times. For we should not be so subservient to our age, that our religious discipline, and the faith we have pledged to God, should be sacrificed. However, it is not true that the rule is unsuited to our age. For now, more than in the past, are we surrounded by dangers; now, more than ever, the license which would assail our reputation runs riot;

(25) Epist. S. P. N. Ign., de virt. obed., n. 11.

(26) In declar. I. c., 3. p. Const.

(27) Ib.

opprobrium and calumny, in word and print, are flung at religious men. And so, all the more need is there, that now, more than ever, the fair name of the Society be securely guarded.

But some one may say, the observance of this rule is difficult for those who are not superiors. Taught by practice and experience, I do not deny that it is more easy for a superior than for any one else, to have a companion ready at his call. But superiors, in their fatherly care, provide that those who are under their charge be not forced to go out alone. That other difficulty perhaps is greater, which springs from a love of liberty, or from the human respect of a few, who think it unbecoming to admit that they are subject to a rule. But reverence for God, and devotion to the Society, our most tender mother, overcome such human respect. And, from the very difficulties which stand in the way of the rule, will the merit be greater for those who observe it; and the more certain will be the fruit of their works and endeavors.

Some there are who are willing, as they say, to observe *the spirit* of the Rule. These certainly refer to no other standard than the spirit of the saintly legislator. Now, what was his spirit in this matter? The history of the Society tells us. Fr. Orlandini, in the 14th book, paragraph 7, puts this marginal note: "It was a constant care with St. Ignatius, that no one of his religious should visit any women without a companion, who was always present as a witness." And then he tells us a fact in these words: "Ever watchful in his charge over his children, guarding their virtue in the midst of their manifold duties of zeal for the souls of others, and solicitous for their good name, Ignatius issued an order for the whole Society, that no one, without a companion should go the houses of women, no matter how noble they were, or whether it was that they were sick; and such was to be the caution and circumspection observed in intercourse with them, even whilst hearing their confessions, that the

companion should be where he could see, though he should not hear what was said. And to show how much he made of this rule, and to sanction the observance of it by an example, when he learnt that one of the priests of the house, an aged man of well known virtue, had failed to observe the rule, through an honest simplicity which excused him from all fault, still, as a warning for others, our holy Father ordered eight of the priests to meet together, and the offender to take the discipline, whilst each of the eight recited separately one of the psalms of David, the first being the *Miserere*.''<sup>(28)</sup>

Who amongst us would ever have ventured to exact such a penance from an old man, a sincere, simple, edifying religious, and a priest? Is this that paternal kindness, which has been praised so much by the biographers of St. Ignatius? It is indeed. It was a singular kindness. For he was doing good, not merely to one of Ours, but to the whole Society; and our holy Father deserved excellently well not only of his sons in his own time, but of all who were to come after. For he was instructing all those who consider the rule as of no importance, and neglect it for any light reason; and, by imposing a grave penalty, he taught us too, how much weight is attached to this ordinance. St. Ignatius was the kindest of fathers, and entertained the tenderest affection for all his children. Therefore, he formed all to sanctity, and made as many as he could partakers of eternal glory. Quite otherwise are those superiors, neither kind nor fatherly, who connive at everything, and tolerate faults and errors, which will have to be atoned for some day in purifying flames.

The mind of St. Ignatius is clear. For the most part, superiors in our own day are of the same mind. I cannot but congratulate them on this, and thank them most sincerely for the effort, labor, and zeal, which they have shown in behalf of this holy rule of the companion. And I am well aware of the difficulties and pains they have so cheerfully undergone, to fulfil God's will, and by word as well as ex-

<sup>(28)</sup> Orland. hist. S. J., l. xiv. n. 7.



ample, to restore the authority of this rule and to maintain it intact. I do not doubt that they have saved the vocation of many, have helped on very many more to greater perfection, have consulted for the reputation and dignity of the Society ; and that they have protected the Society itself, and especially have obtained the divine grace and assistance for houses and provinces. It is my earnest prayer and confident expectation that this same divine favor and assistance will be theirs forever, to be followed by eternal rewards.

If perchance there be some who struggle against this rule, let not superiors lose heart. For it is a question of conferring a great favor upon those who need it most. They are like sick men who turn away from wholesome remedies. We do not leave the sick alone, because they do not want to be cared for ; but first we insist blandly, and then resolutely, upon the application of the remedies, notwithstanding any rebellion of sense and feeling. The deeper our love, the more firmly we insist. Those who neglect the rule are indeed sick ; much more so are those who oppose it, unmindful of what St. Ignatius teaches, that " whatever the superior commands is the command and will of God Himself." By resisting the rule of the companion, they lay open the state of their mind, and afford no obscure indication, that the rule is especially necessary for them. These, therefore, are the more sedulously to be assisted ; and, though they may take it hard to be helped in the matter, we must not desist. For we are conferring a great favor on them, a favor which sometimes falls little short of their eternal salvation. And, so far as in us lies, we should never cease to promote the interests of our brethren, as well for their own sake, as for that of order, and on account of the disedification which would be given, to the serious detriment, if not the very ruin of others.

Some regret, and will continue to regret, that they have not made great account of this rule of the companion. I do not hesitate to affirm that this rule is a great ornament, both of our Society and of those other Religious Orders, whose

honor and edification some of their members rightly consult, by the observance of this rule. If, which God forbid, neglect or ignorance should do away with this observance, we should have to lament the lost splendor of our Society, to our own great injury and disgrace, and to the incredible satisfaction of the evil spirit.

Wherefore, Rev. Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, I ask and entreat you, not to allow this gift of God to the Society, and this singular adornment, either to be lost or to be impaired.

And what I have said of this most important rule, may in some way be applied to the whole plan of our Institute. Let us keep in mind, above all things, that the meaning of rules must be sought, not in example, or what is done, but in authentic documents, or what the principles of our Institute distinctly teach. The example of men, even of those known for virtue, are not laws for us. Example shows us what is done: laws, what should be done. Example varies, and is often at variance with the law; not unfrequently it is what it is, owing to ignorance of the law. The true understanding of our laws must be derived from the Constitutions or Apostolic Letters, from the Constitutions of our holy Founder, from the decrees of General Congregations. It is from these sources first, exhibiting, as they do, the true meaning of our laws, that we must learn the science of the Institute; after that we must go to rules and regulations which either embody the same precepts, or are derived from the same sources. This knowledge is increased and enriched by the Instructions, which, though not laws nor rules nor regulations, yet are taken from the same sources as the laws, and are of wonderful assistance to superiors and others, in carrying on the work of the Society. The oftener we read these Instructions, the more closely and studiously we examine them, the more highly will we esteem the Institute, the more earnestly will we show our love and devotion for the Society, not by word only, but in very deed.

On the other hand, this result follows from ignorance of our laws, that we lay more stress on our own habits and customs than on the Institute itself; that the manner of life throughout the Society is less uniform than it should be; that in the same province, house differs from house in matters of discipline; that in the same house at times, and with the same superiors, not the same method of government subsists; and that nobody knows for certain how to act, since the fixed and permanent standard, that of our Constitutions, is wanting.

All this detracts much from our love for the Society, and our reverence for the Institute. And, if love for our mother is wanting, if her behests are not heeded with the respect they deserve, religious observance must of necessity fail, and, with it, the holy zeal for sanctity and learning, for the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, as well as the lofty hopes of our missions and colleges, all must languish. Then another result, a distaste for all that concerns our state, steals in and possesses the soul; and there arises an opinion in the mind, that the Society does not suit the bent of those who have high aspirations, nor satisfy the enlightened ideas of our age. Strange notion this, of men who do not know our life, or who are blind! Since in fact, our men are asked for more and more, in parts where they happen not to be, and they are asked for in so many countries, that the demands cannot be satisfied; and the petitions come from persons not only of high dignity, but of the very highest.

Where Ours have been established, they enjoy the friendship of upright men; as far as they are allowed, they instruct the youth, assist the population, and do good to all.

With deep grief, the faithful lament their forced departure, and, with untiring endeavor, and labor, and zeal, use every means to obtain for the exiles a happy return to their familiar and dearly loved religious homes.

The Society, thanks to the grace of God, has not grown old. I say this, not as boasting—far be it from me—but as

giving praise and honor to God, our Lord and Saviour, returning due thanks to our Creator, who has shown His mercy to us. <sup>(29)</sup> Full of confidence in this infinite mercy and goodness, again I say, the Society has not grown old. God's love towards it, His clemency towards it, has not at all grown feeble. In this the Fathers of the 22d General Congregation fully agree with me. For they have left us an attestation of their will, and at the same time an example of fidelity worthy of our first fathers, in a document I think proper to lay before you ; so that, since it is of such great weight and authority, it may be known to all of Ours. The decree runs thus :

"The Committee of Fathers deputed to take cognizance of any detriment, which the Society might have suffered, asked the Congregation to control, by its authority, some of Ours, who venture to say that the condition of the times requires our Constitutions to be adapted to the times. When this was reported, the whole Congregation could not help protesting, with indignation. It seemed scarcely credible : yet they could not but believe the Committee. Some asked that against such men, as disturbers of the Society, a severe decree should be formulated. But, since this grievous evil has been fully provided against by the 5th Congregation, decree 54, by the 6th Congregation, decree 2, by the 9th Congregation, 25th decree, and since it is evident that those who are guilty of this disturbance are but few, the Congregation has thought that no new decree is needed ; but that superiors must be enjoined to make inquiries, and, if they find that these men are really guilty, to execute the said decrees in their regard."

The men, whose sentiments were so noble, and who by this decision did an excellent service to the Society, have now almost all passed away. As far as I know, only three survive. But their spirit has not died away, nor the light of their prudence and wisdom. Through the grace and bountiful goodness of God it remains undimmed ; the inborn faith of the

(29) Tob. viii. 18.



Society, its deep-rooted fidelity and integrity, live on in vigor ; and that resolute purpose, that inviolable constancy to principle and rule, is not extinct, nor decayed, nor even enfeebled.

To the most loving Heart of Jesus we return thanks for this most signal grace. The love of our Immaculate Mother guards it for us. Our holy Father is with us, interceding for us. The Society triumphant in heaven lends its assistance to us. The fortitude and glorious victory of our three Saints support us anew and strengthen us to foster this grace of fidelity. For surely we cannot but obey laws, which the holy old man Alphonsus submitted to with such holy reverence, that we can conceive nothing more perfect ; we cannot but hold dear the rules which St. John so dearly loved, that he would sooner die than transgress the least of them ; we cannot but give the first place in our esteem to these observances of ours, which St. Peter cherished so, that, in the midst of the infinite labors attending a most arduous apostleship, he would not think of undertaking any work, however holy, if he could not do so, without detriment to the rule. The great truth had sunk deep into the souls of the Saints, that it is the will of God Himself which is made known to us through the rules ; that such as obey them are acceptable and dear to our Saviour, are worthy of the most holy name of Jesus, and will one day be partakers in eternal glory. That hope of our sainted heroes was not a vain one, nor will your hope be vain, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers, who, following in their holy footsteps, will one day, I am confident, enter the everlasting inheritance of the heavenly kingdom. Desiring this grace most earnestly for all of you and for myself, I commend myself to your holy sacrifices and prayers.

The servant of all in Christ.

ANTHONY M. ANDERLEDY, S. J.

*Fiesole, Feast of the Immaculate*

*Conception, A. D. 1890.*

## XXV.

A LETTER OF OUR VERY REV FATHER ANTHONY M. ANDERLEDY ON SAINT ALOYSIUS, A MODEL OF THE CONTEMPT OF HUMAN VANITIES.

“At Rome of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, of the Society of Jesus, most renowned for his contempt of the princely dignity and for the innocence of his life.”

With this high tribute the Roman Martyrology announces the triumphant passing of our most blessed brother to the heavenly kingdom.

To good purpose did he exchange the badges of earthly power and honor for those of heaven. For the love of heavenly goods, spurning a corruptible crown, he won for himself a never-fading diadem of glory.

With the way to all success open before him, with the pleasures of life within easy reach, with princely power in his native country awaiting him as a birth-right, and loving subjects hailing with eager joy the prospect of his accession; that blessed youth, whose trust was not in passing things, knowing the real value of wealth, of worldly joys, of high rank with all its pomp and pageantry, set these at naught and cast them from him.

With the son of Sirach he knew that “there is nothing better than the fear of God and that there is nothing sweeter than to have regard to the commandments of the Lord. It is great glory to follow the Lord.”<sup>(1)</sup>

And when he had determined to tread closely in the footsteps of his Master, to follow a life of poverty so mean in the estimation of men, he was well aware that this resolution would bring him into a hard struggle with his father. Yet he did not draw back, but with unflinching constancy remained firm against a parent, for whom he always felt the tenderest love and the deepest reverence.

(1) Eccli. xxiii. 37, 38.

He overcame at last, and with unspeakable joy exulted in the crowning of his hopes. So inflamed was the spirit of this noble youth with love for God, that it seemed to be his own good fortune, which was sung in the words of the Royal Prophet: "It is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God."<sup>(2)</sup>

Men sometimes admire a youth who, preferring the everlasting to the temporal, determines to lead a religious life far from home and kindred. Such a one does indeed give up some prospect of the good things of this earth, but often, perhaps, it is the hope of a moderate fortune at best; Aloysius renounced a most ample inheritance. The expectations of the former are often vague, fallacious, uncertain; the future of Aloysius was brilliant, certain, secure. The former must often lead a life of toil, of strife and contention, to attain the goal of his expectations; Aloysius had to struggle with unremitting earnestness to free himself from what was justly his by right of birth.

Others again have withdrawn from the world because they have been warned of its dangers by sad experience; but St. Aloysius, "ever innocent in hands and clean of heart," strove with untiring vigilance that no shadow of evil should steal in to mar the unspotted beauty of his soul. And yet he had to live in the midst of the world, in the court of a powerful king, for he could not, even if he would, withdraw himself from the profane surroundings in which his lot, from early childhood, was inevitably cast. He was brought into close contact with the nobility of his day, with men and women of the world, with the Empress Maria of Austria herself; but that angel of purity never raised to her royal countenance the eyes that were not allowed to look on the face of his own mother. I know not if there can be imagined anything more wonderful than this. So dearly did he prize this modesty, both at home and at court, that even now when we see anyone remarkable for innocence of manners, we are wont to style him an angel, or an Aloysius.

And this virtue which raises man nigh unto the likeness of

(2) Ps. lxxii. 28.

angels, of the Immaculate Virgin, of God Himself, he guarded by a strong and steadfast contempt for external things and placed in that contempt the whole vigor and efficacy of religious life. Justly indeed was he "most renowned for his contempt of princely dignity, and his innocence of life."

But we also have been made like to that angel by the holy state of life to which we gratefully acknowledge that we have been called by the infinite goodness of a merciful God. And we are like our illustrious model in this, that we too must live in the world. For since by the calling of God we have been chosen to rescue men from the dangers that threaten their salvation, we must needs deal with those who are far away from the influence of religion, and whom we must guide to the light of faith, to the worship of God, to an upright life.

But, first of all, we must so fashion our virtue after the likeness of our saintly brother, that, while we are surrounded by the atmosphere of the world, we may not be entrapped by its wiles and its toils. This must be our great care; there must be no fellowship with men who are at enmity with Christ our Lord. While we must help those who have strayed from the ways of God, we must hold aloof from their opinions, their fashions and customs.

By this holy hatred for the world, by this contempt and distaste for earthly things, will we preserve inviolate in all its lustre this supreme glory of the Society, and the stainless purity of our own lives. For whatever dims the brightness of this virtue, has its origin in the base corruption of the flesh. Of the flesh are born those lusts which constitute the spirit of the world. From the flesh arise those internal struggles, which keep the body and the soul in perpetual strife. "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these" as the Apostle of the Gentiles tells us, "are contrary one to another."<sup>(1)</sup>

Now, just as the spirit and the flesh contend with each other in the same man, so they set man against man, and thus loosen the bonds of human society. Some obey the spirit, others are slaves

<sup>(1)</sup> Gal. v. 17.



to the flesh. Cain followed the leading of his carnal passions, so too did they whom holy Scripture calls "the sons of men."<sup>(4)</sup> On the other hand "the sons of God"<sup>(5)</sup> trace their noble lineage from Seth who succeeded the pious Abel. But "the daughters of men"<sup>(6)</sup> drew to themselves nearly all the sons of God and led them into iniquity, "and God said: my spirit shall not remain in man forever, because he is flesh."<sup>(7)</sup> The same was the reason of the dissensions among the sons of Noah and among the sons of Abraham.

The flesh warred against the spirit among the sons of Isaac, and strove together in the cities and in the peoples, and they became estranged the one from the other.

From Adam, who fell away from obedience to God, to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to the coming of Christ the Lord, there was perpetual strife between the sons of God and the sons of men, between virtue and vice, the spirit and the flesh.

From the spirit and the flesh arise those two cities which that admirable doctor of the Church, St. Augustin, pictures to his readers: the city of God and the city of men.<sup>(8)</sup> The first is the home of the sons of God, the second of the sons of men; the one the heavenly city, the other of the earth earthy; the hopes of the former rest in the Creator, of the latter in the creature; the former, a stranger on earth and tending towards heaven; the latter intent on earthly joys as if there were no others to be desired; of the former are they who so use this world that it may lead them to God; of the latter, those who would even make God a means for their full enjoyment of this world; in a word, the former is the city of the spirit, the latter, the city of the flesh.

And it is this city of the flesh we have in mind when we speak of the world. For we mean, by the world, the men who are in the world; yet not all, but only those who are so fast bound by earthly ties that they are not willing to cut loose from them and to cast their lot with Christ our Lord.

(4) Ps. lxi. 10.

(5) Gen. vi. 2.

(6) Ib.

(7) Ib. vi. 3.

(8) De Civ. Dei, l. 15.

And who are these? They are the sons of men who love vanity,<sup>(9)</sup> who cry out: "come let us enjoy the good things that are present and let us speedily use the creatures. Our body shall be ashes," they say, "and our spirit shall be poured abroad as soft air, and our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a mist, and our name in time shall be forgotten and no man shall have any remembrance of our works. For we are born of nothing and after this we shall be as if we had not been."<sup>(10)</sup> They are the sons of men who seek after lying,<sup>(11)</sup> "that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness."<sup>(12)</sup> These are they who "blessed with their mouth, but cursed with their heart,"<sup>(13)</sup> who are liars to that degree that "they practise deceits against their own souls."<sup>(14)</sup> These are they who "have changed the truth of God into a lie."<sup>(15)</sup> They are the foolish men "who became vain in their thoughts and their foolish heart was darkened, and professing themselves to be wise they became fools."<sup>(16)</sup> They catch at a shadow and follow after the wind. The only wisdom left them is that "which aboundeth in evil,"<sup>(17)</sup> the wisdom "that falls into the snare of the devil," that wisdom which St. James defines as "earthly, sensual, devilish."<sup>(18)</sup> For theirs is "the wisdom of the flesh, an enemy to God."<sup>(19)</sup> And what hope or assurance can he have who is an enemy to God? His is the hope of the mad and foolish. "The hopes of a man that is void of understanding are vain and deceitful."<sup>(20)</sup> His hope, as Wisdom tells us, is a "mist," "the trace of a cloud," "the passing of a shadow."<sup>(21)</sup>

But what is most perverse of all is the pride of the world. "Who," they ask, "is the Almighty that we should serve Him? And what doth it profit us if we pray to him?"<sup>(22)</sup> They reject the most holy law of God and obstinately ignore His very existence. "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."<sup>(23)</sup> They hold the Supreme Lawgiver in utter contempt and "look

(9) Ps. iv. 3. (10) Wis. ii. (11) Ps. iv. 3. (12) Is. v. 20. (13) Ps. lxi. 5. (14) Prov. i. 18.  
 (15) Rom. i. 25. (16) Rom. i. 21, 22. (17) Eccl. xxi. 15. (18) Is. iii. 15. (19) Rom. viii. 7.  
 (20) Eccl. xxxiv. 1. (21) Wis. ii. 3, 5. (22) Job. xxi. 15. (23) Ib. xiv.

upon the Almighty as if He could do nothing." <sup>(24)</sup> This is the pride that Isaias denounces ; " we have heard of the pride of Moab, he is exceeding proud ; his pride and his arrogance and his indignation is more than his strength." <sup>(25)</sup>

And the sign of this insolence and arrogant disdain is the fierce and barbarous cruelty with which the world treats those who will have no part in its wickedness. " Let us oppress," is the will and command of the world, " let us oppress the poor just man, let us lie in wait for him because he is contrary to our doings and upbraideth us with transgressions of the law ; he is grievous unto us even to behold, for his life is not like other men's." <sup>(26)</sup>

And so if we consider the origin of the world, it is vileness itself ; it is the flesh striving against the nobility within us, against our spirit ; its characteristic qualities are vanity, blindness, folly and pride ; its words are words of malice and lies ; its works are deceit, foulness, violence and persecution of the innocent.

But why do I dwell upon these details ? Is it to be feared that any of us will associate with the wicked, or countenance or advance their pernicious cause ? The soul shrinks with horror from the mere thought of it. But since even in that community of the Apostles over which Christ our Lord Himself presided, the world was a frequent subject of conversation, but always with a view to the condemnation of its spirit, will it not be profitable often to excite that same holy hatred for the world within ourselves ? The world has shown itself not only unmindful of His benefits, but at all times most bitter in its enmity to Christ our Lord.

" God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son—that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him." <sup>(27)</sup> And this was a blessing unto the world so great, that not even God Himself could bestow a greater.

And in what spirit did the world receive so great a gift ? " The world knew him not." <sup>(28)</sup> The world hates its Redeemer, <sup>(29)</sup> as St.

<sup>(24)</sup> Ib. xxii. 17.

<sup>(25)</sup> Is. xvi. 6.

<sup>(26)</sup> Wis. ii. 3.

<sup>(27)</sup> John. iii. 16, 17.

<sup>(28)</sup> John i. 10.

<sup>(29)</sup> Ib. vii. 7.

John declares, and he adds that it hates and persecutes the Apostles.<sup>(30)</sup> For the world is from the flesh, and in the words of St. Paul, "he that was born according to the flesh persecuted him that was after the spirit; so also it is now."<sup>(31)</sup> Ismael bitterly afflicted his brother Isaac, and in like manner worldly men cause grief and distress to the faithful servants of Christ.

Add to this that "all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."<sup>(32)</sup> "The whole world" therefore "is seated in wickedness,"<sup>(33)</sup> submitting in base servitude to its master the devil, of whom Eternal Truth foretold: "The prince of this world shall be cast out."<sup>(34)</sup> For this reason the Saviour of the world, in His last discourse before His Passion, declared to His Apostles: "I pray not for the world."<sup>(35)</sup> For the world rejected the benefits of Redemption and made fruitless the work and prayer of the Son of God.

This is the city of men, this is the city of the flesh. There are some indeed who, though not prepared to enroll themselves among its citizens or to give themselves up to it wholly, by an open secession from the faith and obedience of Holy Church, yet lack the courage to make open profession of their loyalty and devote their energies to the cause of Christ our Lord. They are the men of "double heart" mentioned in Ecclesiasticus (i. 36), whom the Prophet Elias describes as "halting between two sides,"<sup>(36)</sup> serving God in appearance, but in truth taking sides with the world. They endeavor to strike a balance between the Divine Saviour and the world whose touch corrupts. They deny that there is any real opposition between these two characters, the man of the world and the Christian; that a life of piety in all relations with God, is incompatible with a free and unrestrained consorting with men of the world; that there is any harm in granting to the world all it demands, in all external things that are seen by men, if only we pay to God the tribute of interior devotion in the secret of the closet. To find favor with the worldly-minded they seek to pre-

<sup>30</sup> Ib. xv. 18; xvi. 33.<sup>31</sup> Gal. iv. 29.<sup>32</sup> I. John ii. 16.<sup>33</sup> Ib. v. 19.<sup>34</sup> John xii. 31.<sup>35</sup> Ib. xvii. 9.<sup>36</sup> III. Kings, xviii. 21.



serve their reputation as men well up in the ways of the world, and at the same time, by acquiring a reputation for virtue, they would stand well with those who are God-fearing and virtuous. They fancy that the claims of earth and those of heaven, that vice and virtue are not irreconcilable; that they may enjoy both the pleasures and honors of this world and those of heaven. Thus, whilst they imagine they can serve two masters, they are establishing self-worship; they make their own inclinations the law of their lives, they throw off all moral restraint, and boast that liberty is the crowning right of man. And so they are entirely at one with the world which is impatient of law, and "thinketh itself born free like a wild ass's colt" in the woodlands.<sup>37</sup>

This inconstant sort of men is perhaps the most dangerous of all, and since we may be often called to apply the necessary remedies to their spiritual disease, it must be our greatest care that neither by indulgence nor connivance, much less by falling in with their ways, we ourselves take the infection and so fall away from the perfect observance of our Institute. Let us take to heart the warning word of St. John the Apostle and fix it firm and deep in our minds: "Love not the world nor the things which are in the world."<sup>38</sup>

There is no question of love here, but of war. We must fight against the world; we must strive with all our might to capture souls for Christ our Leader, that as many as possible may be wrested from the enemy and brought to a loving surrender of their soul's service to their Redeemer.

And where are the beginnings of this glorious struggle to be made? Where else but in ourselves? From our own hearts must be torn out, with the help of God, whatever of the world may have found lodgement there. And although we may be brought into close contact with the men of the world, we must keep aloof from their ways and their principles. For since we have been dedicated to God, our ways must tend upward to sanctity and perfection. For whatever is holy and consecrated to God must be

<sup>37</sup> Job xi. 12.

<sup>38</sup> I. John, ii. 15.

separated and kept apart from what is profane, as something peculiarly God's own. Sanctity flourishes and blossoms in seclusion from what is noxious. The evil effects of the intimacy will show themselves in the mind that loves what is beneath it. There is nothing that will not suffer deterioration by contact with what is worse than itself.

Wherefore God commanded that whatever had been dedicated to the Lord should be set apart as holy to God. He demanded that the first fruits should be offered to Him and should be held sacred. He commanded them to be laid aside from all the rest. "Set aside with you," says Moses, "first fruits to the Lord."<sup>39</sup> Holy vessels were not to be put to profane use, but were only for the service of God. A day was sanctified, kept apart and named the Day of the Lord. So too a holy place, a holy land, a holy city are dedicated to God in everlasting veneration.

God chose for Himself a people that they might be holy. He separated them from the nations. For thus He spoke by Moses: "You shall be holy unto me because I have separated you from other people, that you should be mine."<sup>40</sup> "Thou art a holy people to the Lord thy God," says Moses, "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be His peculiar people of all peoples that are upon the earth."<sup>41</sup> For this reason the people whom the Lord chose were unlike all other nations, widely differing from them in life and manners.

Peculiar among that people, and separated from the rest of men, were their priests, for this is the word of the Lord: "Let them therefore be holy because I also am holy."<sup>42</sup> Wherefore He separated them from the land; "and the Lord spoke to Aaron: You shall possess nothing in their land, neither shall you have a portion among them. I am thy portion and inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel."<sup>43</sup> For they were to typify the priests of the New Law chosen of God, of whom the Council of Trent decrees that in all their ways they should show forth gravity, mod-

<sup>39</sup> Exod. xxx. v.<sup>40</sup> Levit. xx. 26.<sup>41</sup> Deut. vii. 6.<sup>42</sup> Lev. xxi. 8.<sup>43</sup> Num. xviii. 10.

esty and a truly religious demeanor, that they should be formed to habits of study, abstaining from all luxury, banqueting, gaming and trifling sports, and from all manner of secular business.<sup>44</sup> For these things are at variance with the priestly dignity and holiness. The priests of God, therefore, must have no part in these things; and Religious, above all others, must keep such things far from them. For it is evident that God pointed us out in particular when He said: "I have separated you from others, that you should be mine."<sup>45</sup> He separated us when He led us out from the land of Egypt, that is from the world; He separated us when He placed us in a safe retreat to save us.<sup>46</sup>

And this place of safety, in order that it too might be holy, that it might be His in truth, He has separated and fenced round by the barrier of the cloister. Past ages testify that without this defence the virtue of holy men was not sufficiently protected, nor the approach and entrance of profane love of the world sufficiently checked. And so it has been an especial care of the Supreme Pontiffs to guard and secure, by wise enactments, this abode of innocence and religion.

On the authority of Lucius Ferraris<sup>47</sup> we have it that "by the name of cloister, into which admittance is forbidden to women, is understood the entire space within the walls of the monastery or convent; that is to say, the cloister, cells, shops, refectory, dormitory, infirmary, kitchen, and the like." This, he says, is the common doctrine. He then goes on to say that "gardens, orchards and walks adjoining the convent are included under the name of 'cloister,' so that women trespassing on them incur excommunication." This opinion he confirms by the authority of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.<sup>48</sup> He excepts the case in which "the gardens and walks are separated from the cloister by locked doors and suitable walls."

Angelo Lucidi has almost the same thing: "No one" he writes,

<sup>44</sup> Trid. sess. xxii. c. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Lev. xx. 26.

<sup>46</sup> Ps. xx. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Prompta bibl. v conventus, Art. iii. n. 9-12.

<sup>48</sup> S. C. Epp. et Reg. 24 Apr. 1582, 13 Sep. 1583, 3 Jun. 1606.

"ever doubted that the garden, grounds, walks, and woods, if any there be within the walls, are included ; both because this is the common opinion, and because the Popes and the Fathers of Trent have forbidden admittance within the enclosure, and the Sacred Congregation, on the 13th of Sept. 1583 makes a special declaration to the effect that gardens and walks are included in the cloister of monasteries for men, and consequently, all the more, in the enclosure of nuns." <sup>49</sup>

There is need of seclusion that religious men may, with peace of soul, offer to God an acceptable service according to their various Institutes. It was the complaint of St. Pius V., "that this peaceful seclusion was not a little disturbed because women, forgetful of the modesty becoming to their sex, made bold to enter the houses and monasteries of religious men. Wherefore of his own accord and certain knowledge, and from the fulness of apostolic power, he revokes each and every faculty and permission to enter monasteries of religious men, of what Order soever, under whatever circumstances granted by the Apostolic See to all women, whatever be their condition or state of life, and declares the same to be null and void and of no effect." <sup>50</sup> To the decree is added the sanction of penalties incurred by women who should violate this law.

So great was the solicitude of the Roman Pontiffs in this respect, that Gregory XIII., the successor of Pius V., renewed the same prohibition in terms even more severe. "We recall," he says, "and nullify all permissions and privileges whatever, to enter monasteries, houses and premises of nuns and religious men of any Order whatsoever, given to any women of whatsoever condition or state of life, even if granted freely and with full knowledge, and from the plenitude of apostolic power, or at the request of Emperors, Kings, or other rulers, even if these privileges have been confirmed and repeatedly renewed." <sup>51</sup>

Most severe of all is Benedict XIV., in his annulment of all

<sup>49</sup> Ang. Lucidi. de vis. sacr. lim., c. v., n. 43.

<sup>50</sup> S. Pius V., c. Regularium personarum, 24 Oct. 1566.

<sup>51</sup> Greg. XIII., c. Ubi gratia, d. 13 Jun. 1575, § 1.



indults and privileges admitting women within the enclosure of religious houses.

“With much grief we have learned,” he says, “that some, interpreting pontifical laws and precepts to suit themselves, have allowed women free entrance within their houses, notwithstanding plain and solemn prohibitions, and that others, alleging privileges, faculties and supposititious concessions, have permitted women to be received and entertained within the enclosure of their monasteries. On this account, we are daily admonished, because of these and like abuses, by the just expostulations of Superiors and other members of religious Orders, who have been moved by zeal for the honor of God and the religious discipline of their own Orders, to apply a timely and salutary remedy for the removal of these abuses.” The remedy was the confirmation of the laws already enacted concerning the cloister.

“In virtue of our apostolic authority,” he decrees, “we renew and confirm each and all of the constitutions enacted by the Roman Pontiffs both before and after the decrees of the Council of Trent concerning the enclosure of monasteries of all religious men whatever, and we order, decree, enjoin and command the inviolable observance of the same by each and everyone whom it may concern now and hereafter.”

The Vicar of Christ then revokes and annuls all indults and privileges permitting women to enter within the cloister of convents, for whatever reason, even out of devotion and to take part in processions accompanying the Blessed Sacrament.

Again he prohibits all, even Cardinals, whether singly or in their Congregations, even under pain of incurring censures, to allow women under any circumstances to enter the cloisters of religious men.<sup>52</sup>

These laws are full of wisdom, they have much to do with our growth in holiness, and they are the enactments of the highest authority on earth, even of the Vicar of Christ our Lord. More-

<sup>52</sup> Bened. XIV., c. Regularis disciplinæ, d. 3 Jan. 1742, §§ 2, 3, 4, 5. Vid. Ferr. Pr. bibl. v. clausura, nn. 2, 3.

over the papal sanction, given them not once but repeatedly, and that too with much solemnity, as Benedict XIV. reminds us, gives them additional weight. Can we, then, for a moment doubt that it is the will of God Himself that we obey them with great reverence? For they were not made for monks only, but, as Gregory XIII. declares, for all religious Orders, and Benedict XIV. proclaims that they are to be applied to all monasteries of religious men whoever they may be.

Although these pontifical decrees were not promulgated until after our Holy Founder's death, yet the spiritual discernment of St. Ignatius had already led him to say that it was "becoming, from reasons of propriety and decorum, that women should not enter our houses or colleges, but only our churches."<sup>53</sup> These reasons of propriety and decorum appeal most strongly to all right-minded men, but to Religious in particular; and our Holy Father was so well assured they would have great weight with the companions of Jesus that he did not think it necessary to have recourse to threats of punishment or motives of fear, or to severer legislation upon the subject.

In our case this law of enclosure is so efficacious for removing what is worldly from us that, without it, it is next to impossible for the heart, under the influence of corrupt nature, not to experience that yearning which prompts and spurs it on to the pursuit of the shadows and unrealities of this life. Those, then, if any such there be, who would have our doors flung wide open and ready entrance given to those whom religious propriety and the decorum proper to our Order forbid us to receive beneath our roof, have no right to complain of the lack of spiritual men among us.

Now no one can fail to recognize the wickedness and exceeding depravity of the times. Often are we compelled to give up our old homes that were so well suited for cloistered life and to go forth in quest of new and strange habitations. Clearly, the powers of darkness rage with implacable hate against our Order. These are the attempts of our cunning and treacherous enemy the devil; and

<sup>53</sup> Const. p. 3, c. i. n. 14.

they are his helpers, his partners and confederates who long to see the Society of Jesus ruined and undone. Their craft and their assaults it must be ours to elude and bring to nought ; nor may we yield one jot or tittle to their wiles and their wickedness. For what man, in his sober senses, would deliberately walk into the pitfall his enemy has prepared for him ? The more crafty the prince of this world is in his attempts to deceive us, the keener should be our vigilance in protecting the bulwarks, the walls and the stronghold itself of our virtue and sanctity. Enclosure therefore must be secured. It should be the first characteristic to appear when we establish a new residence ; the last to disappear when we are compelled to abandon an old one.

God has appointed for our fidelity a reward in keeping with His infinite munificence. And if we observe this pontifical law with that fortitude of soul which should characterise us, the immense advantages thus accruing to our religious life will make abundant amends for any losses we may fear to sustain from the displeasure of those who are anxious to know what there is to be seen in our houses and grounds.

They may be few, perhaps, who are urged by this prying curiosity ; but all are edified by our example of religious observance. For men feel their hearts stirred to thoughts of piety when they see our houses closed against vanity, and they come of their own accord to believe that innocence dwells therein secure in all its integrity ; that virtue and letters are studiously cultivated there ; and they look upon our dwellings as the homes of purity, peace, tranquillity, brotherly love, and union with God. This is what gains good-will and veneration for the Society ; this is what wins us glory before God and men. For such is our manner of life, such our way of consulting for the salvation of souls, that men are not only impressed by our words but feel themselves drawn by our example, till even the sight of our very walls lifts up their souls to the thought and the love of God.

So very important is this law and custom which goes by the name of Enclosure, that St. Francis Xavier in a letter to Fr.

Baertz, Rector of the College of Goa, urged it upon him in the strongest terms, even adding a command thereto. "There are some constructions," he writes, "that cannot be delayed, such as the wall around the garden of your house, and the shutting up of all entrances, if there be any other than the principal door. For the protecting of religious houses by a perfect and complete enclosure concerns the discipline and good name of the house to such an extent, that there can be no lawful reason for putting off such work. These things, then, must be carried out at once, and at any cost."<sup>54</sup> In such words does the great Apostle of the Indies admonish us to admit no one to our houses but by the main entrance, and to enclose by a wall the gardens attached to them; so intimately connected is this with discipline and our reputation, that he would have it done without delay, and at any cost. In truth, our saintly men knew well wherein lies the glory of the Society, and the safeguard of its fair name.

So much for our houses. For if, as men who have consecrated themselves to God and thereby severed all connection with secular concerns, it is our duty to fly the world, as far as our occupations allow, and always to cultivate a lasting contempt and abhorrence for its manner of life, its customs and its way of thinking, it is very clear that our dwellings also must be closed to the world, to its vanities, its aims and pursuits.

But if, as the pontifical decrees command and St. Ignatius prescribes, the world is shut out from our homes, it is neither in harmony with the divine will, nor in accordance with our manner of life to go after the society of people without, and to desire to mingle with them longer than the necessities of our sacred ministry require. Now if in our works of piety bounds must be set to our zeal, that we may, as far as possible, keep ourselves at home, how much more fitting it is for us not to leave our homes to visit parents and relations. It is but proper that they who belong to God should be separated from flesh and blood.

It is our Saviour Himself, most kind and merciful though he

<sup>54</sup> Apr. 1552.



was, who says : " I came not to send peace, but the sword." <sup>55</sup> For it is a result of human depravity, that those who have given themselves to God must bear the hatred of men who will not lead a Christian life. It is for this reason that in the same household the good must often live in conflict with the wicked. For our Lord explicitly says : " For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother." <sup>56</sup>

He even utters this threat : " He that hates not father and mother—and brothers and sisters—cannot be my disciple." <sup>57</sup>

St. Ignatius would have each of us apply these words to himself. <sup>58</sup> And they are words so weighty, so severe not to say terrific, that they seem to have been chosen on purpose to impress upon our minds the conviction that the matter is most serious and is not to be lightly passed over. They mean contempt for the world, and it is evident, from them, that there is no hope of making truly spiritual men of those who have not wholly put off this attachment to flesh and blood.

On this subject we have the concurrent witness of the masters in the spiritual life. St. Basil teaches us that the evil spirit busies himself very assiduously in trying to bring back often to our minds the remembrance of our relations. <sup>59</sup> Climacus asserts that the demons often disturb the sleep of Religious by representing to them their parents weeping over their loss, or suffering various trials and hardships on account of them, or at the point of death. <sup>60</sup> " But it is better," observes the same author, " to bring some grief to the hearts of earthly parents than to that of our Lord." <sup>61</sup> And since this grief comes from carnal affection, St. Augustin advises us to set about removing both, not only in ourselves but in our relations likewise. <sup>62</sup>

Our Father Nigronius relates of St. Charles Borromeo that the saintly Cardinal used to complain that his own ardent longing for divine things was cooled when he had to deal much with his own kindred ; he found that their very kindness and their affectionate

<sup>55</sup> Matt. x. 34.

<sup>56</sup> Ib. x. 35.

<sup>57</sup> Luke, xiv. 26.

<sup>58</sup> Exam. c. iv. n. 7.

<sup>59</sup> Const. Mon. c. xxi.

<sup>60</sup> Grad. iii.

<sup>61</sup> Ib.

<sup>62</sup> Ep. 38, Ad Lætum.

invitations had an unfavorable effect on his endeavor to attain to contempt for the world and for its life, that they withdrew him somewhat from his holy labors and from his generous care of the needy.<sup>63</sup> Holy men are quick at detecting whatever weakens virtue; they who are not holy, either fail to perceive such things, or persuade themselves that they rather gain some good, than take any harm from their free intercourse with their relations.

Let us hear on this subject Father Charles Scribani, a man who had filled with distinction the highest offices in the Society. He thus recounts the dangers we have to fear. Our love of the Society and our brethren, he says, is transferred to our relations. The world's favor is coveted. What goes on in our houses is revealed to outsiders, and the secret counsels of superiors are related to gossiping women. A somewhat tender conversation, as he puts it, "with a relative of the opposite sex, a liberty allowed to the eyes, enkindles once more the flame that had been buried under the ashes of years. Fearing no evil from those near of kin, and throwing off some of our usual caution, we may easily run into these dangers which beset us so nearly, or at least they will be the cause of too familiar an intimacy with other persons of the same sex."<sup>64</sup> Hence the fear of Father Lessius, lest they should be ruined spiritually who mingle too familiarly with their relations.<sup>65</sup>

No doubt there are a great many parents who lead lives of piety and are not infected by the spirit of the world. But in our parents' house it is not only our parents that we meet. Moreover, long conversations and frequent visits, letters sent home and letters received from home make us more ready to hold similar intercourse with others and to seek among them the good things of this life. Then come banqueting and amusements, which agree well enough with the ways of seculars, but are surely quite opposed to the dignity and religious gravity of men consecrated to God.

Wherefore I could not be held guiltless if that Ordination which declares that the General alone can give permission to visit parents,

<sup>63</sup> Tract. ascet. 16. n. 14.

<sup>64</sup> Medic. relig. l. 3. c. xix.

<sup>65</sup> De statu relig. q. 4. n. 46.

were allowed by me to become a dead letter. It is a wise Ordination, and secures the Provincials against the importunate entreaties of parents. Still, when circumstances arise which render it advisable for anyone to go home without delay, the Provincial has power to grant permission for the journey ; but he is enjoined to appoint a companion, and afterwards to mention the fact to the General.<sup>66</sup>

I am well aware that many would visit their relations in order to provide for their eternal welfare. But God will look to that if we faithfully devote our energies to what concerns ourselves and what we have vowed to the Most High, understanding everything according to the Constitutions of the Society. Should we wish to take the care of our parents into our own hands, we are in danger of injuring ourselves without bettering them.

It was for our instruction that our Lord and Saviour uttered those words : " A prophet is not without honor save in his own country and in his own house." <sup>67</sup> Without honor do some religious perhaps return from their homes, because their relatives and others who had heard that they were dead to the world, dedicated to God and intent only on things of heaven, have now found out that they have still some love of earthly things about them, and are not quite so spiritual as they were reported to be. Those whom we visit are wont to be on the watch for any signs of human frailty in us, and should they detect any, and discover that after all our life is not very different from that of other men, so far from changing their ways, they will rather come to the conclusion, after seeing us, that they may enjoy life without danger.

This is to be deeply deplored, but still more deplorable is it that in our parents' house the love of the world and its vanities revives within us, whilst fervor and zeal grow tepid. Then happens what we are taught by the author of the Imitation of Christ, who was so well versed in these matters : " A joyful going abroad often brings a sad coming home." There is sadness in his cell oftentimes for the Religious returning from a visit, sadness in the com-

<sup>66</sup> Ord. Præp. Gen. com. tot. Soc. c. i. n. 4 ; Inst. v. II. ed. Prag. 1757, p. 240.

<sup>67</sup> Matt. xiii. 57.

mon life, sadness in the company of his brethren, sadness in his prayer, sadness above all in the practice of obedience; and the whole man, prostrated and afflicted, is a prey to darkness and melancholy. Then rises up within him the memory of the days when he was in the world. His soul dwells on what his eyes can no longer behold, and he longs for ease and freedom. And the result is no slight loss of familiar intercourse with God; and they best know how serious an ill this is, who possess the happy and devout habit of God's presence.

Why, then, do we make these visits? To come back discontented? To make store for ourselves of vexation and trouble? To squander the good we have acquired with so great an effort? To revive within us our vicious inclinations? For such we undoubtedly have within us, and against them we have to keep up a steady and wearisome strife. The spirit of the world is inherent in the heart of man: the love of license, the desire of glory, an unholy vanity and levity of spirit.

Wherefore theirs is a dangerous notion, who fancy that we must develop the mind by travel and sight-seeing, with paintings and other works of art and industry, and that we must feast our eyes on all the rare and remarkable objects of natural interest or human discovery. These vain and profitless things may do perhaps for men of the world, but are not at all for Religious. For he is not according to the definition of a Religious, who indulges his senses and yields to the desire of seeing all manner of things, although they may be proper; but he who follows after the more perfect gifts, mindful that he is devoted, not to the world, but to God; who wishes to be of the number of spiritual men, and who, to that end, keeps his senses under control and desires to develop, by the love of God, the strength of soul to deny himself all that is an attraction and delight only to the eyes.

And to say a word about art-galleries: in our day these have their dangers; nor are we lightly to trust those who protest that there is no danger at all therein, and that only what is proper is exposed to view. For it happens that men, taught by the superb



cunning of the evil spirit, set at the threshold sacred paintings to attract those who shrink from beholding anything improper, and further on exhibit such as are indecent. It were better indeed to consume all works of art with fire than by the least sin offend the infinite majesty of God. For my part, I am inclined to think that very few, if any, take profit from such curiosity, and that many suffer serious loss.

We have examples among us of those, who, following holy Job, have "made a covenant with their eyes," and who never set foot in such places at all, but keep away from them out of love for the Immaculate Virgin. They will not regret having paid this homage to the Most Pure Mother of God, and it is the more acceptable to her, the harder it is to make the offering.

But there is another form of excessive curiosity of the eyes and mind, theirs I mean, who are perfect busybodies, inquisitive of others' affairs, never hesitating to examine into the manners and doings of their neighbor. Now this passion for hunting out everything and prying about everywhere is frequently followed by the unfortunate habit of detraction. And would that the fear of Rev. Father Aquaviva were never justified, namely, to quote his words, "that we may fall into mortal sin, which, in this matter, is an easy thing to do." <sup>68</sup>

This is a terrible thing and one which the Roman Catechism condemns so far as to set down unhesitatingly that "he who is overtaken in this sin is doomed to the everlasting punishment of hell. For no man may hope to obtain pardon for his calumny or detraction, unless he first make satisfaction to him, whose honor and good name he has in any way defamed either in open court or even in private and familiar conversation." <sup>69</sup>

This is a hard saying, but the doctrine of St. Nilus, as quoted by our Orlandini, is perhaps still harder. "No man," says Nilus, "shall meet a surer penalty than he who schools others in his own vices. For the ruin of his scholars brings a weight of punishment on their teacher; nor yet shall the pupils escape severe condemna-

<sup>68</sup> Industr., c. xvii. nn. 12, 15.

<sup>69</sup> Part 3, c. ix. n. 20.

tion, since they have shamefully followed his example in things which, by the guidance of reason itself, they should have fled as sinful.<sup>70</sup>

It is true that this was written against those who resist the rules and impede religious discipline. But it has a like application to those who detract from another's reputation, since these produce imitators of their sin, so that the wanton habit of detracting, once it has taken hold, cannot be eradicated perhaps in a whole life time.

Now all this I have said of the world, where not uncommonly is found an unbridled passion for seeing and examining everything, for canvassing men's characters and detracting therefrom, and I have thus spoken, that the dangers of the world may be made apparent, and that each one may see what great evils are to be feared from easy intercourse with worldly men. The deeds of the world are profitless, vile and unworthy, the more hurtful because they are too lightly accounted, and a mad love of the world is bringing on mankind an infinite loss and injury.

But the life of St. Aloysius has set before us how the soul is enriched by contempt of the world. You know the story of his wonderful life, and the mere mention of his contempt of human things must bring before you the vision of the sublime soul of that most perfect youth, aspiring to things eternal.

For in this he presents a brilliant example whereby we may learn to abhor all that the world loves, to desire what Christ our Lord loved and embraced.<sup>71</sup>

It is our business and duty to draw other men also into a share of this hatred and horror of the things of the world and to this love of the livery of our Lord and of His cross unto salvation. And the chief portion of this holy work concerns our young men. Now by whose help, by whose assistance shall we compass a thing so hard? Of a surety, by none other than that of our patron St. Aloysius. For the vicar of Christ our Lord has consigned all young students to the protection of this holy youth. And we are taught by his bright example that the seeds of virtue must be sown at a

<sup>70</sup> Tract. in summ. const. opusc., I, p. 1, § 2.

<sup>71</sup> Exam. Gen., c. iv., n. 44.

tender age. This is the aim, this the intention of those who labor in our colleges. These are they who with literature and philosophy, as with sweet viands, win the young to all piety.

Nay even the pagans of old set so high a value on a liberal education that they crossed over seas to learn eloquence, and undertook long pilgrimages, and repaired to the cities of Greece and Asia, to find there abler masters and from their lips to drink in the principles of philosophy. Moreover, the more highly civilized nations among them provided by law against the corruption of morals among the young. The Spartans established a magistracy, whose business it was to watch over the morals of their youth.

Aristotle exhorted the people of Macedon not to exhibit certain works of art to their young men, nor to admit them to the public plays and comedies.

The Church has taken far greater care of the proper education of youth. Men of the highest fame and even religious Orders have given their labor to the young. Councils have passed laws full of wisdom on this very thing, as a matter of the gravest moment. All Christendom has held nothing more precious, nothing more sacred than the attention and constant care whereby the young might be imbued with sound principles of morality. St. Ignatius, all his life long, set his every effort to this point, and to this end opened colleges in divers places. In many parts of the world the Society continued training up young boys to a life of faith and good morals, and now keeps up the good work to the great saving of souls.

The suppression of the Society was lamented by the whole Catholic world on account of the deplorable consequences to the young, and a demand arose with well nigh unanimous voice that the injury to Christianity be repaired.<sup>72</sup> The Sovereign Pontiff granted the petition of the Emperor Paul I., who asked its restoration, "for the education of youth in good morals and in knowledge."<sup>73</sup> He revived it in the two Sicilies "for the instruction of youth in the Catholic religion, in good morals and in letters."<sup>74</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Const. *Solicitududo*, Pii VII. an. 1814.

<sup>73</sup> Const. *Catholicæ*, Pii VII. an. 1801.

<sup>74</sup> Const. *Per alias*, Pii VII. an. 1804.

Chiefly for the same reason he restored it throughout the world. And the Society, true to its end, accepted with ardent zeal and noble enthusiasm the mission entrusted to it by the common Pastor of all, and with no less constancy has continued to discharge the trust.

Hence the wrath of the evil-minded ; hence the ill-will and implacable hatred of the so-called " Liberals." These suffer us more readily to discharge other ministries, provided we are allowed no influence over the minds of the young. They are well aware how great a power for good or for evil is that of education and training : they know that on the training of youth the welfare, the very safety of the commonwealth depends. But the more eagerly they assume, and that unjustly, the Church's right of teaching, the more ardently must we strive, that, as far as in us lies, we too may, at the Church's instance, gain possession of this right.

And this indeed our Provincial Superiors desire, this they strive after with the greatest solicitude. And when I think of it, I am filled with admiration for their zeal, their fortitude and constancy in a matter which in this our time is not without great difficulties. Still it is a matter of grave importance and enjoined upon us by our holy Father, who has declared the care of youth to be a work peculiar and proper to our Society. On this account the very Formula and Rule of the Institute prescribes it, our religious vows make pledge of it to God, in fine, it is one of the substantials of the Institute.

Now the obstacles in the way of the noble efforts of Ours are the vanity of the world, an effeminate bringing up at home, and the modern style of teaching, by which we are attracted and enticed into seeking specious results, rather than sound fruit. It is true that this system aims at extensive and varied information, but it gives only a smattering of the things which make most for the formation of the mind to scholarship. Our young men skim the surface rather than absorb the substance of these many subjects, and go out from college unformed, and superficially instructed, but in their own persuasion great scholars.



The necessity has indeed been laid upon us of adopting this new method of teaching. I sympathize with those who direct our colleges: I sympathize with the teachers. But we must make a virtue of necessity.

It is already the custom in many of our colleges to mend, as far as possible, whatever deficiency there is in modern methods, by means of our "*Ratio Studiorum*." Thus our professors of literature work against the shallowness of our time, and strive that their young men may imbibe solid learning. This is indeed a praiseworthy effort, which the Divine assistance also has so far prospered, that in these very colleges those who follow the course of study, are both in greater numbers and with more brilliant success brought to the end we desire.

It is certainly our duty to make every effort that our pupils may acquire a serious and constant desire of advancing in letters. And for that reason, most of all at the present time, we must do away with everything that may beget and foster a lack of serious purpose or distract the mind and entice it away from literary studies. Under that head come all manner of things, but especially certain entertainments and plays; and these must be moderated according to the instructions contained in the thirteenth rule of the Rector in the "*Ratio Studiorum*."

This light and superficial spirit is encouraged also by great magnificence in our buildings and a certain pretentiousness of outward appearance. There are some, perhaps, who fancy that the Society gains a great reputation from structures of extensive magnitude, and from lavish expenditures, whereby we purchase an esteem of our immense resources and the envy of men, at the price of unlimited debts.

Would not these act much more wisely, if they gave heed to the decree of the First Congregation, which says: "There must be moderation, as far as possible, in the buildings of our houses and colleges, lest, besides other inconveniences, they sometimes become like princely palaces; rather let them be convenient, healthful and substantial for our habitation and the discharge of our duties; in

such wise, however, that we may still appear mindful of poverty.”<sup>75</sup> Even before this decree was made, the saintly Apostle of the Indies had already given this command to Father Gaspar Baertz : “ Now, in general, look to it that you take less care of the structures which are built out of stone and mortar, than of the spiritual temples of God. By these I mean our brethren and pupils, entrusted to your fidelity, over whom it is right that your first anxiety be to watch, that they may have all necessary support and fostering care, and above all be encouraged to advance in virtue.”<sup>76</sup>

In one word, this is the sum and scope of our efforts, that our training of youth be not only thorough, but holy and Christian. For young men should go forth from our colleges, deeply imbued with the principles and practice of faith and good morals, fortified with a horror of sin, and so attached to the service of God, as not to blush to confess Christ our Lord before men.

It is indeed an effort worthy of all praise and even necessary, to secure for our pupils successful examinations and, if need be, distinctions and degrees. Still we must above all things have in view the glory of God to whom our labors in training the young are then most acceptable when, like Tobias, we teach the pupil to “ fear God and abstain from all sin.”<sup>77</sup> We must therefore bend every endeavor to form the hearts of the young to piety and virtue. Let their ears and their tender minds grow familiar with the maxims of faith and sound morals, and let those be set apart for this all-important branch of training who show special aptitude for it. In early times men of profound learning were sought out to explain the rudiments of faith ; and these renowned schools of sacred science were presided over by such illustrious doctors as Pantenus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen.

In our schools also this heavenly learning should hold the first place, and thus all men will know that the ordering of life after the pattern set us by Christ our Lord is the object of our chief praise and esteem. And therefore do I hold those Rectors worthy of special praise, who are active in imparting this knowledge, not

<sup>75</sup> Cong. l. d. 113.<sup>76</sup> Apr. 1552.<sup>77</sup> Tob. i. 10.

only to their own pupils, but, with the help of their pupils, to others also who live in woeful ignorance of it. It is God who has inspired this heaven-sent wisdom ; for such surely is the wise contrivance which induces select young men from our colleges to instruct poor children in the principles of faith and morality. I have often been moved to pity by the sad condition of young boys cast out upon the world, wandering uncared for through the streets and public thoroughfares, familiar with scenes of depravity, learning to blaspheme God and all holy things, while growing up in utter ignorance of their Lord and Redeemer. To these unfortunate children comes knowledge of a better life through the salutary instruction of the young men who act under the guidance of our Fathers, and whose words will have the more power and influence from the fact, that being of a higher station in life they descend, nevertheless, to mingle for good with the poor and wretched. Nor did the Saviour of men despise this kind of labor. He loves the little ones, and " His eyes look on the poor man." <sup>78</sup> How much more will He cherish those who teach poor boys to love God and to fear offending Him. And while our pupils perform this blessed task, they themselves grow constant in piety and draw down upon themselves more abundant graces from heaven. Double praise is therefore due to those of Ours who with admirable zeal and spirit either set on foot or encourage this work, of all works the most conducive to eternal salvation. Another great good is secured by labors of this sort : our pupils, thus trained, will, when they have chosen a career in life, become more attached to us, and lend their efforts to Ours for the furthering of God's glory and the salvation of souls.

This holy zeal in teaching the poor, paves the way for the formation of Sodalties of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which even Sovereign Pontiffs have so highly commended. It is to be greatly desired that those who have studied in our colleges should join pious societies of this kind ; for such sodalties help wonderfully to the leading of a good Christian life ; since each individual member

<sup>78</sup> Ps. x. 5.

is encouraged and spurred on by the united example of many. Moreover, a select body, the flower of Christian manhood, so to speak, is thus formed and equipped : so that chosen from among many they may bring honor on religion, by frequenting the sacraments, by turning from the vanities of this world in order to secure the glory of the next. The example and aid of such men we use for combating the errors and false notions of the time, for thwarting the schemes of the evil-minded, for furthering whatever good work may benefit holy Mother Church.

It is also very useful, not to say necessary, in these times, to form pious associations among artisans and laborers ; and there will be less difficulty in the way of this undertaking, if these men, in their earlier years, have been taught the truths of Christian doctrine by us. Our efforts in this direction will be very fruitful of good to Church and State ; innumerable evils will thus be stifled in their birth, and long standing abuses removed.

Here some may object that the rule of the Companion hinders us from directing sodalities properly, or, in general, that one of the ends of the Society, which concerns the salvation of souls, affords a warrant for neglecting this rule ; for, say they, men of the world must be visited often ; by familiar intercourse and pious conversation they will be won over from worldly vanities to a care of their eternal welfare. All this is very plausible. But does anyone imagine that these considerations were unknown to those who made the rule or to those who, these many years, have so religiously observed it ? Surely we do not fancy that our fathers were less wise than we, or less zealous for the salvation of souls. They trusted rather to divine than to human wisdom, and they were persuaded that the salvation of souls depends on the blessing and favor of God. Now they who obey the law, far from hindering, rather secure the blessing of heaven for their labors. By obeying God's will, not by resisting it, do we accomplish God's work. And who can doubt that a rule framed by legitimate authority, approved by apostolic constitutions, the safeguard, moreover, and very bulwark of our virtue—who can doubt that such a rule is in accordance



with the divine will and most pleasing to God? It is a holy rule ; holy in its origin, holy in its admirable fruits. To say nothing of other great advantages, it secures the Society against unprincipled slanders ; it is a shield and a defence to our fair fame. It is surely an immense misfortune that a cloud should settle on the name and reputation of a whole Religious body ; and by the imprudence of any one of its members, sore affliction may come upon the whole body of the Society. Should such a misfortune befall us, no one of us could bear the accusing glance of men or dare to raise his eyes in public. The prosperity and adversity of our Mother, the Society, affect each of us individually ; and since we all share in her glory, it is but just that we do our part in guarding her honor.

Now the interest of the whole Society demands of us that we observe this rule most faithfully and that no one be exempt from its observance except for the gravest reasons. Indeed, if we have any rule which must be kept firm and unchanged, in which no one of Ours ought to desire any exception, or seek for himself any dispensation, it is this holy precept about the presence of a companion. And therefore many superiors, loyal to the Society, spare no pains in enforcing this rule, and the more vehemently evil spirits oppose it and bestir themselves to blot out the very memory of it, these superiors, solicitous for the good name of our Order, zealous for religious perfection and fearful of any offence to the divine Majesty, watch the more constantly for the welfare of the Society and rouse themselves to noble zeal in a matter of such importance. To these many others of Ours lend assistance, and whole provinces, even, through the holy efforts of their superiors, both help on the good work and beg moreover that this salutary rule be retained. These look to the friendship of God rather than of men ; they therefore find favor in the eyes of the Lord of all, from whom they will receive the full reward of fidelity. These men know well that the most useful rule of the companion does not stand in the way of God's glory.

This rule does certainly hinder undertakings and labors which had better be laid aside than continued, which give loose rein to

wilfulness, with corresponding detriment to propriety. Not unfrequently also does it thwart little schemes of our own which we pursue with inordinate eagerness. And if, out of regard for the rule, we must at times discontinue works which seem to be for the glory of God, let us rest assured that God will provide for His own glory and the salvation of men ; and this all the more, because we, by obeying the rule, are conforming ourselves to His most holy will.

And now a word about Sodalties of the Blessed Mother of God, which seem to require of us more familiar intercourse with the members of them. I have seen large and fervent associations of this kind admirably directed by the wise management and pious exhortations of moderators, who, for the renewal of fervor, for establishing peace or accomplishing any good work, acted always through one of the more prudent officers ; and these officers, by reason of such holy occupations, acquired the habit of drawing men from vice to virtue, of looking after the Church's interests, and of helping by moral support and substantial aid the ministers of God in every pious undertaking. Thus the moderator, relieved of the burden of making visits, secured time for preparing exhortations and sermons with which to instruct the sodalists, to rouse them to the correction of faults, to develop in them a greater love of virtue, a greater devotion to God. And this furthering of devotion in God's service must be the end of all our efforts as well in sodalties and colleges as in every other field of labor. In the colleges especially let a spirit of piety influence and mould the tender minds of the young, and let "the beginning of wisdom, the fear of the Lord" grow upon them. If this spirit be carefully fostered in the pupils, we will not have occasion to complain that our labors are fruitless, owing to the small numbers who attend our colleges. In this case the few will be equal to a host ; for experience teaches us that young men who were eminent for piety, application and success in studies, have frequently much to do, in after life, with the direction of affairs ; their sphere of influence is often very wide ; they hinder much evil in the state itself, they accomplish a

great deal of good, and within the domestic circle they, as well as others who have been members of sodalities, "united to God," to use the words of the Apostle of the Indies, "will govern in peace their wives and families."<sup>79</sup>

We certainly desire to reap from our labors much fruit for the glory of God; and in order to secure this in our sodalities, great care must be taken lest the aspirations of the members be turned aside from God and the love of virtue, and spent upon worldly vanities. For these societies were instituted to promote the due service of God and of His Blessed Mother, to ensure the frequent use of the Sacraments, to prepare the members of them for a happy death; hence they have no fellowship with the world. At the present time those sodalities flourish most which are governed by Fathers who give themselves to the work with untiring zeal and skilful management, and their efforts are nobly seconded by those who with admirable devotion train men and youths in the spirit of the Exercises of our holy Father. And, in fine, the good work receives spirit and encouragement from superiors of houses and provinces, of whom some have been at great expense and trouble to build houses for retreats. All these faithful sons of the Society are doing a work truly pleasing to God and in perfect harmony with the work of the Lord Himself. For "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."<sup>80</sup>

That this divine work may be lasting, it behooves us to look forward to future years and provide for those by whom, when we shall have passed away, the work of the Society will be carried on. In these I earnestly desire to see implanted whatever tends to a contempt of the world. This year especially, which marks the third centenary of Aloysius' triumph, and, moreover, his glorious example, warn me to exhort to a contempt of worldly vanities our novices and scholastics, who are especially dear to this heavenly guardian and defender of innocence. How I wish that these our brothers in whom rest all our hopes for coming years, would imbue their souls with that lofty contempt of the world which

<sup>79</sup> St. Francis Xavier to P. G. Baertz, 17 kal. Maii, 1552.

<sup>80</sup> Luke, xix. 10.

crowned Aloysius with immortal glory. On the path marked out by this wonderful youth they entered when they joined a Society wholly consecrated in name, and in deed, to our most blessed Redeemer.

And what was the path trodden by St. Aloysius in his journey through life? It is marked all along by the glorious fruit of innocence and the signs of that purity of heart, which are prescribed by the very first words in the Rules of the scholastics: "Let our scholastics endeavor to preserve in themselves purity of heart." For the very nature and tendency of our peculiar manner of life must lead us to this—that we hold in horror every least offence against the Divine Majesty. And this holy disposition cannot abide in the soul side by side with the love and desire of things profane.

Far removed from sin, Aloysius guarded so jealously the purity of his soul and the lustre of his innocence as to shut out even the approach of temptation. He was master of his every sense; and although he never felt the rebellious assaults of the flesh, yet he ever watched with unremitting diligence, lest the corrupt flesh or the cunning senses should contrive some dangerous attack. He subdued and held in check curiosity, that friend of the world and virtue's enemy. True, there were some visits in which St. Aloysius did take delight. But they never led him to art-galleries, to public shows, to theatres, or other profane sports; nor had he any desire to travel abroad. His longing led him to holy places where he might feast his eyes upon the image of Christ crucified—this alone he cared to view. His modest eyes sought only the Redeemer of man. He never undertook a journey save when obedience prescribed it for some reason of strict necessity. Wherever he stopped in his journeying, his gaze would search the room to find somewhere the dear image of our dying Saviour; and if he did not find it there, he would somewhere sketch one for himself. So sweet to him was the presence of the King of eternal glory, who spent His life in poverty, and breathed out His soul in such want, that none was ever poorer, none more utterly destitute than He.



Indeed this poverty of our most loving Master was never absent from the thoughts of St. Aloysius. Hence his love of poverty was so great that he chose the meanest things for himself, that he delighted in coarse food, in poorest raiment, and in his dingy room—a room so narrow, in fact, that it could scarce hold a bed, and its darkness was hardly relieved by one narrow window in the roof. It was out of this love for poverty that he would hardly keep so much as a pious little picture for himself. Nay, when he was stricken with that last grievous illness of which he died, it was his wont to choose the cheaper medicines of those that were set before him ; and when asked the reason of this, he made answer that such were the medicines the poor would use. Finally, when he thought that his end was come, he begged to be allowed to die, not in his bed, but upon the floor.

Surely, we who dearly love this sainted youth will be moved by his example at least to forego whatever is not in keeping with religious poverty, and not to be ashamed of the poverty of the Son of God. The Society of Jesus is our pride ; we boast its name ; let us also glory in the poverty of our dear Master. It is not enough for us to call poverty a holy thing and to praise it. Each one must be prepared, according to the Rule, to experience at times some of its effects—to stand in beggar's guise at the gateways and to beg from door to door, when obedience or necessity shall require it. Therefore they are true Religious, who in a thing of such importance as is the vow of poverty, do not indulge themselves, nor run after the delights of this life ; who reject and discard all that has the appearance of personal adornment, delicate food, fine clothing and elegant furniture, and hold all these unworthy the poverty of the Son of God.

Such is the sentiment of those who are wise according to the spirit of our Institute, and not according to the common opinion of the world. Loyal, too, and faithful to Religion are those Superiors who give gladly, and to the full limit of their means, all that is needful for the decent maintenance of their subjects, who have a fatherly care of their health and are watchful to relieve the

pain and the discomforts of illness, but yet forget not to use all care for the safe-guarding of poverty, allowing none to use anything as their own or to keep by them costly objects unsuitable to poor men such as we profess to be. Like praise and approval is deserved by those Superiors who refuse all superfluities, especially when there is question of travelling. It cannot be allowed to us, without infraction of poverty, to make long journeys for mere recreation : for we are not supposed to travel merely for pleasure's sake, but for some purpose necessary or at least very useful. And when this happens, whilst the necessary expenses of travel must be provided, still, this allowance is not to be so large and liberal as to enable us to travel by roundabout ways, or to be absent too long from the house or college to which we are assigned. He who is sent, should deem it his duty to take the most direct route to his point of destination ; and on returning from a journey, an account of expenditures should be given to him whose business it is to receive it.

Now this same law affects also travellers of another class. The conveniences of our times have this inconvenience, that in the very cities in which we reside, Ours do not now, as formerly, go about on foot, but ride in the various conveyances which abound in modern cities ; and for this purpose they are accustomed to keep some money in hand. Now lest they who avoid the toil of foot-travel should also offend against the Seventh of the common Rules, let them on leaving the house obtain money from the person who is appointed for this by the Superior, and give up to him whatever is left on their return. And he to whom the money was returned, must give an account of it to the Superior.

But lest this facility of using public conveyances should at all affect the holy rule of having a companion, let those also who use such conveyances in the cities, have their companion assigned them. For it is better to please God at a little additional expense, than to slight a regulation of extreme importance. Neither is that contrary to poverty which is expended for the protection of our good name and our virtue.

When we cherish this holy regard for the perfection of our state and for Religious poverty, we are using those very weapons with which Aloysius fought the world so victoriously ; and we raise our souls wholly from things temporal to those which are eternal, just as he did whose happy lot it was that whilst "he knew God visibly," he was "by him rapt unto love of things invisible."<sup>81</sup>

In his soul, thus far removed from things of sense, glowed that blissful charity, that chaste love, which united him so closely to God that he could not withdraw his mind and his thoughts from contemplation of the Supreme Good. His whole life was governed by that law of charity which St. Ignatius prized so highly that he did not hesitate to call it the primal law, the very soul of the Constitutions, having force and efficacy beyond all external regulations. For this virtue leads those in whom it dwells to undertake and achieve far nobler and more arduous works than any exterior laws enjoin. What lawgiver, think you, would dare fix by rule those continuous fasts, those corporal penances, that most rigorous guard of the senses which we admire in St. Aloysius ? And yet he whom charity impels, will think that he has done little, even when he has, with heroic will, tasked the extreme endurance of nature in great labors, hardships and sufferings.

Fortified with this law of charity, our holy brother nourished within him a spirit so brave and constant that, when there was question of a Rule or a Superior's order, no matter how exalted the rank of those who gave occasion for its infringement, he never feared to say that "it was not allowed," "it was against the Rule." He held it certain that in obeying the Rule he was certainly doing the will of God.

No doubt God would have us take into account the various circumstances in which men may be placed. But we must not, for the sake of the world, depart from the rule ; nor, generally speaking, should there be any mitigation of the law, unless it be required for some reason which we must believe to have God's approval. And, therefore, while our course is not always clear, especially when

<sup>81</sup> Præf. Nativ. Dom. N.

customs, or times, or circumstances of place seem opposed to some of our rules ; yet it is always safer to lean rather to the strict observance of the law than to weaken it by exceptions.

This is in keeping, too, with papal regulations. For when the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VII., of holy memory, showed his great regard for our Order by restoring to life throughout the world the Society then nearly extinct, he declared that the Regular Orders were the glory and the support of Religion and of the Catholic Church, though he grieved to note a decline in their discipline. But the members of our Society he described as strong and skilful rowers in the bark of Peter, and expressed his confidence that they would be true to their rules "in all times and places." Here are the Pontiff's own words :—

"We remind and exhort, with all earnestness in the Lord, all and each of the Superiors, Rectors, members and scholars of the Society to prove themselves, at all times and in all places, faithful followers and imitators of their great Father and Founder : to keep with all observance the rule which he established, and to endeavor with all zeal to carry out the wise directions and counsels which he has left to his children."

This earnest exhortation of Christ's Vicar concerns all the members of the Society ; it is for all times, for all places, in whatever parts of the world the children of the Society may exist. Thus the Rule, approved and sanctioned three centuries ago, has been proclaimed, in the present century and by the highest Tribunal on earth, not only fitting, but necessary. Times change ; the manners and minds of men change ; but that which was established by divine inspiration and direction may not be modified at the pleasure of men.

Be it ours, then, to show ourselves true to the Society, honest and brave guardians of its laws—of those laws, I mean, which now exist, of this our Society as it is now ; nor let us ever think of looking for any other ideal that might be fancied in its stead. For from this Society, such as it is, and such as it should be according to the mind of the Sovereign Pontiff, we receive the most



signal benefits, living and dead we are sharers of its graces, at all times, and in all places. Is it not then most just that all of us, always and everywhere, should follow the same Rules?

Now all this flows from that law of charity which St. Ignatius commends, not for the weakening of the law, but for the better strengthening and protecting of it.

We must add to this the very nature of our vocation. We recognize and bewail the sad plight of the world. The minds of men are drawn downward to what is earthly and degrading, bent upon pleasure and ease; unbridled licentiousness and pride of intellect so rule the world, that each one deems he may fix for himself what rule of life he lists. Who shall heal these gaping wounds? We, surely, if by our manner of life and our example we strive to draw the minds of worldly men from the pleasures of the world to the love of the cross of Christ. In the cross is salvation!

Not from the Cross were men looking for salvation, but from a powerful Messiah who was to sway a perishable sceptre. They asked him: "Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?"<sup>82</sup> But Christ never took into account the times, or the opinions, or the expectations of men, even of the well-intentioned. He did not come in the strength and power of full manhood; but as a child, the carpenter's son, poor, filled with reproach, nailed to the cross. Yet did he so conquer the pride of the world that He could declare to His Apostles: "I have overcome the world."<sup>83</sup> Many another has overcome with the help of Christ. St. Aloysius overcame, and we, too, shall overcome if we reject with scorn the vanities of the world. This blessed youth now glories in this contempt of the world; he rejoices that many things he saw not, that much he knew not, that he held aloof from the vanities of life. He overcame, and he urges us to the conflict, and begs of God that he may have us for the partners of his bliss. This we owe to our love of him, that contemning what he despised, and loving what he embraced, we may now "fight the good fight," and hereafter, in blissful fellowship with that angelic youth, we may sing unto our God hymns of praise and thanksgiving forever.

I commend myself to your holy sacrifices and prayers.

Fiesole, feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, 1891.

The servant of all in Christ,

A. M. ANDERLEDY, S. J.

<sup>82</sup> Acts i.

<sup>83</sup> John xvi. 33.

## XXVI.

A LETTER OF OUR VERY REVEREND FATHER ANTHONY MARY ANDERLEDY TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS ON PROMOTING DEVOTION TO THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS—A WORK WHICH, TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, WAS ENTRUSTED TO OUR SOCIETY.

He who is rich in mercy,<sup>(1)</sup> for the exceeding charity wherewith He hath loved us<sup>(2)</sup> and hath drawn us to Himself taking pity on us,<sup>(3)</sup> appears to be continually trying to invent new ways of showering His benefits upon us. Was it not enough for Him to have created man to His own divine image and to have bestowed upon him the grace of God and made him the heir of an eternal kingdom?

Let us suppose for an instant that there were those who had never known God, and yet had heard that a being of wondrous majesty had not only drawn man from original nothingness and chosen him to be the companion of his eternal glory, but had also given himself as guide and leader to man in this mortal life, that thus beatitude might the more surely and easily be attained by him. Do you think that those who were thus ignorant of God would ever believe in this report, or even grant that such goodness was possible? And what would they say, were they given to understand that this same being had undergone a most cruel death for the sake of man?

Nay, we ourselves, without divine revelation and the aid of supernatural grace as a light to mere reason, could never, I will not say, comprehend these truths, but by any manner of means come to believe them. For even if men were mindful of His boundless mercy and were desirous of showing their gratitude and love to Him in return, the goodness of God would seem to surpass human belief.

<sup>(1)</sup> Ephes. ii. 4.<sup>(2)</sup> ib.<sup>(3)</sup> Jerem. xxxi. 3.

In fact, however, He has heaped these blessings on man who refused to obey Him, on man who cared naught for God's gifts, on man who self-willed and insolent, is by his very nature a rebel against the divine Majesty. God could have spurned so ungrateful a being and have cast him aside ; still He did neither, but had pity on his misfortune, and in the words of Scripture, was made a curse for us : <sup>(4)</sup> that is, He took our curse upon Himself ; He was made sin <sup>(5)</sup> : that is, a victim for our sins ; He bore our punishment, and bore it in such a manner that the prophet mourning over Him, had to exclaim, "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins." <sup>(6)</sup>

These surely are wonderful proofs of divine love ; but what is still more wonderful is that although we are by the light of faith perfectly certain of the reality of these favors, yet many by constantly hearing of them, become so accustomed to the divine bounty as to be little or not at all affected by what may be well termed, incredible marks of God's love for us.

Meanwhile our loving Saviour ever intent on drawing our wills to Himself, has used all the sweetness of love and grace to captivate men's souls, which are so little inclined to what is divine and heavenly. Not satisfied with pouring out for us the last drop of His blood and nourishing us in our stricken and helpless condition with His precious body, He determined to take up His abode among those who were so forgetful of His graces. And then, after He had thus, as I might say, exhausted the resources even of a God, and had nothing left wherewith to enrich us, through a marvelous excess of love He revealed to us His sweetest Heart Itself, and so renewed in this one gift the memory of all the blessings He had bestowed upon mankind.

Could our divine Saviour have given the world a stronger proof of that wondrous, nay, boundless love which embraces every member of the human race ? The Lord of Hosts, the King of heaven and earth reveals His Heart to the whole world, and there is not a single man on the face of the earth who can not in all truth say

<sup>(4)</sup> Gal. iii. 13.

<sup>(5)</sup> II. Cor. v. 21.

<sup>(6)</sup> Is. liii. 5.



with the Apostle: "He loved me and gave Himself up for me."<sup>(7)</sup> There is no one who is not loved by this Heart, of all hearts the most lovable, the most holy, the most faithful and constant in love, and which, being a divine Heart, not only loves us with a holy love but also makes us holy by loving us.

That there might be no doubt of His divine affection for us, He gave the world an evident token of His boundless love; from His own lips we hear these most consoling words: *Behold this Heart which has loved men so much!*

The great importance of these words, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, you yourselves have often realized as you meditated upon them with hearts thankful to God and burning with love for Christ our Lord. For these are the words by which the public worship of the Sacred Heart was introduced into the Universal Church, for the salvation and consolation of ourselves as well as of innumerable others.

From the same words we learn what it is our Lord wishes us to worship and why we are to worship it. His Sacred Heart is proposed to us by the Son of God as the object of our love and the reason we are to worship it is because this Heart has loved man so much.

With regard to the first point we must bear in mind that the Church of God has ever paid to the sacred humanity of Christ the worship which we call adoration (*latria*). For the entire humanity of our Lord, united with the divinity in the person of the Word, claims our adoration. But if the whole of the humanity is thus united, it follows that the parts of this humanity are likewise joined to the divinity. Now the heart is part of the humanity, a most noble part in every man; in Christ Jesus a divine part and chosen by our divine Saviour to be proposed to our adoration. For this Most Sacred Heart subsists in the person of the Son of God and lives in the Son of Man, of whom the Eternal Father says when He introduces the first-begotten into the world: "Let all the angels of God adore Him."<sup>(8)</sup>

<sup>(7)</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

<sup>(8)</sup> Hebr. i. 6.



The second point concerns the reason of this worship : Among even ancient peoples the custom obtained of taking the heart as the symbol of love ; and it is very much to our purpose that our Saviour Himself has also taught that the source of love is to be found in the heart. For He has commanded us to love the Lord our God with all our heart,<sup>(9)</sup> and from the depths of His own gracious Heart He has uttered those soul-stirring words : *Behold this Heart, which has loved men so much !*

Whence it is evident that we ought to adore the Sacred Heart as the symbol of that boundless love, which Christ our Lord bestows upon the whole human race.

What love can be compared to the love of Christ our Lord ? For assuredly it is not possible to deny that the incarnation of the Word was due to the infinite love God bore us. "God so loved the world," says St. John, "as to give His only-begotten Son ; that whoso believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."<sup>(10)</sup> Such a gift clearly demonstrates how great is the love and affection, which God has for us. The Father gave to man His Son, equal to Himself and to the Holy Ghost, for there can be no difference of inequality in the three divine persons. He gave that Son, who has the same essence, the same will, the same power. So great indeed is this gift of God, that a greater could not be bestowed upon us.

Now what was the reason of this, what end had the Eternal Father in view in sending Him who is the "splendor of His glory and the figure of His substance?"<sup>(11)</sup> Surely it was no other than that He should make us share in His eternal inheritance. God had promised it to our first parent, who had been created the son of adoption. And this was a gift so great as to be hardly conceivable. Still greater was the gift, which by the mercy of God, restored man to the lofty honor he had despised, when Adam fell away from the obedience he owed to God and lost the dignity of the sonship of God by eating the forbidden fruit.

But the greatest honor and glory by far was bestowed upon man

<sup>(9)</sup> Matth. xxii. 37.

<sup>(10)</sup> John iii. 16.

<sup>(11)</sup> Hebr. i. 3.

when "God sent His Son made of woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." <sup>(12)</sup>

This dignity so graciously given to man, so ungratefully rejected by him but again granted by God, furnishes an everlasting proof of God's love. For this is the love which neither ingratitude nor contempt nor crime nor even impiety itself can overcome and turn away from us. Now from this very love does the Sacred Heart of Jesus proceed, and with this same love is that Heart ever burning; for the principle and origin of this most amiable Heart must be sought in the eternal love of the Three Divine Persons. This love of the Most Holy Trinity it is which has given us the Humanity of Christ and inclosed in that the sweetest Heart of Jesus.

For we are bound to follow the rule, that whatever God produces outside of Himself in His creatures is an effect common to the Three Persons, and so with the eye of faith we perceive the Most High and Most Holy Trinity intent on this work, and we understand too that the reason thereof is because God *so loved the world*.

But that our redemption might be still more clearly recognized as the outcome of divine love, the holy Scriptures attribute it in an especial manner to that Person of the Blessed Trinity who is in every respect the common love of the Father and the Son, and Who, proceeding from the Father and the Son, joins them together in an union eternal and indissoluble.

It is evident, therefore, that the sacred Humanity of Christ, and consequently the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, is the result of divine love.

What need have we of further proof to understand that the Heart of Jesus is the symbol of divine love, when the will of Christ Himself, the sacred writings, and the very origin and principle of the Sacred Heart bear witness to the fact.

This love from which the Heart of Jesus proceeds, and from

<sup>(12)</sup> Galat. iv. 4, 5.

which it draws its very existence, it continually exercises ; it perpetuates this holy love to the greatest advantage of man, for whom the Sacred Heart has never ceased to glow with affection.

There are indeed as many witnesses to the love of the Sacred Heart for us as there are actions of the Son of Man, or works or sorrows and afflictions, which through their special connection with the heart, are attributed to and emanate from it.

Judæa, the scene of the blessed labors of the Son of God, Mount Olivet and Calvary, the perjured testimony at His trial, the mockery, the insults, the blows, the cowardly and corrupt judges, the choice of Barabbas by the infuriated Jewish rabble, the upheaval of the earth, the rending of the rocks—the fear and the mourning which pervaded all nature when the King of heaven and earth expired :—What are all these but so many witnesses to his undying love ?

Is it possible to conceive sufferings more bitter than these, which He endured to prove the greatness of the love of His Heart ? Yes ; and they were so cruel and so bitter that the Sacred Heart Itself began to fear and to be sad, and in His struggle with death the sweat of our Saviour became as drops of blood trickling to the ground. And what are they ? One thing alone could terrify the Sacred Heart, and this was the sight of the torrent of sin and the flood of iniquity that poured in upon Him, as if He in truth were the guilty one, Who thus deluged with crime was forced to appear before the divine majesty and receive the dire punishment, which the outraged justice of God demanded.

To the very dregs did our loving Redeemer drain the cup of intensest suffering, toil and inhuman cruelty, and not a moment did He hesitate at the ignominy of the cross itself. Who would ever have dared, I shall not say, to beg from heaven's King, but even to wish for redemption at such a price ?

And while with such charity He suffers so much for us, they for whom He is suffering do not even deem worthy of pity "that man of sorrows acquainted with infirmity." <sup>(13)</sup> "I looked for one

<sup>(13)</sup> Is. liii. 3.



that would grieve together with me, but there was none ; and for one that would comfort me and I found none." <sup>(14)</sup> Nay more, He had to suffer what those in affliction find hardest to bear : " All those who saw me, mocked me." <sup>(15)</sup> Hence was it necessary for the Son of God to acknowledge His shame : " For thy sake I have borne reproach ; shame hath covered my face." <sup>(16)</sup>

The angels are astounded at the inconceivable greatness of the love which flows from this loving Heart, and marvel that all men do not render love in return. But although few among the sons of men show their gratitude, the generous Heart of our Lord does not on that account narrow the circle of its love.

He allures mankind with the hope of reward, and promises such graces to those who honor His divine Heart, that we cannot wish for greater. Can we long for anything better, or desire anything more precious than peace and tranquillity ? When our labors weigh heavy upon us and cares oppress us, how soothing the thought that by our side stands the heavenly consoler eager to hearken to our prayers and ready to grant us His choicest blessings. The tepid will be inflamed with heavenly love, the fervent will grow in holiness of life. As in life so also at the hour of death may we find rest and protection in that all-merciful Heart ; and if we consecrate ourselves to the Heart of Jesus, we have the Saviour's solemn promise of life eternal.

He who ponders upon all this with a reverent and devout mind, must necessarily be drawn to a vehement love of the Heart of Jesus ; and surely we shall consider him foolish, who on perceiving these promised blessings, does not immediately and entirely consecrate himself to the most Sacred Heart. For in this devotion there is no element of fear or terror ; on the contrary it presents to our mind every motive which can possibly urge us to love and confidence. Behold that Heart opened for us on the cross—the source of all blessings, the pledge of charity and of that mercy, of which we stand so much in need. Gaze as long as we will, we shall find no harshness there nor sadness, but shall be cheered by the image of a wonderful,

<sup>(14)</sup> Ps. lxxviii. 21.<sup>(15)</sup> Ps. xxi. 8.<sup>(16)</sup> Ps. lxxviii. 8.



and divine loveliness. His own Heart it is, that the Son of God of His own accord offers to us, exhorting us kindly to contemplate it and to ponder how much it has loved man. Add to this the promise of the highest blessings which drive away all fear either in this life or the life to come, and hold out to us the pledge of a death full of consolation, with a firm hope of eternal happiness. Such indeed are God's promises to every one of us. Is it possible to conceive anything more sublime, or more conducive to salvation?

In a more singular manner, however, has God bestowed His grace on this least Society of Jesus, for He has laid upon us the sacred duty of teaching the nations the nature of this devotion, and the wondrous power of the love of the Sacred Heart. Yes, it is our duty to console all men and to bear to them the glad tidings that a way is open to the divine Heart Itself, that it is lawful for all to gather heavenly blessings from this immense treasury of graces.

The wealthy and the powerful are not easy of access, they guard themselves against the prayers of the needy, whose requests they are slow to grant. But the King of heaven who is rich in mercy,<sup>(17)</sup> sweetly invites all to come to Him: "Come to me," He says "all ye that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."<sup>(18)</sup>

He invites those whom the pride of man despises: the unhappy and the miserable He calls in preference to others. He wishes these to know that the wise man spoke most truly when he said of Him: "It is my delight to be with the children of men."<sup>(19)</sup> Thrice happy are they whose lot it is to announce these tidings to mortals, and thus to make known "the wondrous works of God."<sup>(20)</sup> So honorable indeed and glorious is the office, that it seems quite surprising that the work should have been committed to this least Society.

As with astonishment I ponder over this remarkable goodness and mercy of God towards us, the thought occurs to me, as it has occurred to you, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Christ, that it was our Father St. Ignatius who has obtained this favor for us. For it was the ardent desire of our holy Father, that he himself

<sup>(17)</sup> Ephes. ii. 4.<sup>(18)</sup> Matth. xi. 28.<sup>(19)</sup> Prov. viii. 31.<sup>(20)</sup> Job, xxxvii. 14.

and his sons should be fashioned on the glorious model of our divine Saviour. The book of the Exercises, the Constitutions and his saintly manner of government are the proofs of this assertion.

He was ever thinking how to gain a more thorough knowledge of our Lord's life and actions, ever striving to become more familiar with that divine mind and will, and daily endeavoring to make his own the holy desires and the sublime thoughts of the Sacred Heart. We know likewise that there is amongst us not only a pious tradition, but the firm belief that it was our Lady herself, the Virgin Immaculate, who suggested to St. Ignatius all he taught and commanded us.

This at all events is certain, that the mind of St. Ignatius, his zeal for the glory of God, the Constitutions he framed for us cannot but be approved of by our divine Leader, Christ Jesus.

Therefore the means by which the Society obtained this sublime office of propagating the devotion to the Sacred Heart are the very same, by which it must take care to retain this office.

Why is our Society the Society of Jesus? Because it follows the manner of life set down by St. Ignatius and obeys the laws of so great a father. So long as it remains faithful to these rules, it will be pleasing and acceptable to God our Lord, and will exhibit in some degree an image and likeness of the Sacred Heart. It is certainly the great glory of our Fathers and Brothers who lived two centuries ago, that they found such favor before God, as to merit the office of propagating so sacred, so sweet and so salutary a devotion.

May God continue to bless our labors in this same undertaking! I am well aware that the labor is immense—indeed this fact gave me the greatest consolation, when I learned it from the reports that have been sent me from all the Provinces and Missions. The zeal of our Fathers and Brothers, so worthily exercised in spreading that fire sent from heaven, in the hearts of men, who by this means are bound in love to the Sacred Heart of the God-Man, this zeal, I say, is a thing very soon recognized and commonly spoken of by those who have intercourse with our Fathers.

But neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.<sup>(21)</sup> In order then that this fruit of our labors may be not merely apparent, but as we wish it, real, abundant and lasting, we must pray assiduously, and conform our life to the spirit of the Institute; for such a life, by reflecting the image of the life of Christ our Lord, will be an imitation of the Sacred Heart.

But we must remember that an essential condition for this imitation, is a life spent in the closest union with God, without a thought or aspiration which has not its dwelling-place in the sweetest Heart of Jesus. Now we can live in this holy union with God, even while engaged in working, after the example of Christ, who with all truth said of Himself, "I always do the things that please Him."<sup>(22)</sup> We also do what is pleasing to God, when we do what is commanded us, cheerfully, earnestly, orderly; then indeed we serve God and not ourselves.

And if we are not allowed to interrupt this union, even during our labors, how much more are we bound to preserve it, when we give ourselves to those works of piety, which are very intimately connected with the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and which on that very account more strongly attract the soul and hold it fast, since by one glance at the Divine Heart as it lies hidden in the most blessed Sacrament of His love, there open before us again all the mysteries of the life and of the cruel sufferings of the Redeemer.

He is not only born daily on our altars, but He ever remains with us. He leads a hidden life in our midst, He intercedes for us<sup>(23)</sup> in His concealment, He is our teacher, He recalls most vividly the memory of His sufferings and death, He makes satisfaction for our sins, but He can never satisfy the love He feels for us.

I should do you an injustice, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers, were I to exhort you to prepare your hearts carefully when you are about to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice or to receive Holy Communion. For we all adore Christ the king of glory, we praise

<sup>(21)</sup> I. Cor. 3. 7.<sup>(22)</sup> John, viii. 29.<sup>(23)</sup> Rom. viii. 34.



and proclaim His wonderful kindness, and at the same time we grieve at our own poverty, destitution and misery.

It is clear to all that, while engaged in these acts of devotion we must be most careful that these words of the Prophet Aggæus may not seem to have been spoken of us, when he says, "Set your hearts to consider your ways. . . . You have eaten, but you have not had enough: you have drank, but you have not been filled with drink."<sup>(24)</sup>

They merit this reproach, who while partaking of one food, long for another. They do indeed eat the heavenly bread, the bread of angels and not of men, yet they hunger not for this heavenly manna but for the perishable and fleeting goods of earth, the esteem, friendship and praise of men and that glory which has no value or importance in the eyes of God.

It is impossible, as reason and experience both teach us, to enjoy this blessed union with God either in our work or in our exercises of piety, unless we have withdrawn our minds from the enticements of the world, and it is equally manifest that we can never expect to partake of heavenly consolations, if we do not cast aside the worthless little indulgences with which men are wont to comfort themselves.

Justly then does that Divine Heart, which has given Itself to us, enduring for our sakes sufferings most shameful and cruel, ask from us in turn hearts united to Itself and wholly detached from things of earth. For a like reason it will be necessary that our heart be wholly detached also from self, and our heart will be thus detached if it be an obedient heart. In this matter it is not I who exhort you, but Saint Ignatius himself, when he tells us: *Deliver freely and dedicate to your creator in His substitute the freedom He has bestowed upon you.* For it is no little advantage of your free will that you are able to give it back to the Lord. By so doing, you do not only not lose your liberty, but rather increase and perfect it.

On this obedience, according to St. Ignatius, the whole good

<sup>(24)</sup> Agg. i. 5, 6.



and safety of our Society depends. Hence it is that he so earnestly entreats us to conquer and subdue this most excellent and difficult part of our soul : *to the end*, he adds, *that the true and solid knowledge and love of God Almighty Our Lord may draw our hearts wholly unto Him*, or in other words he says that obedience is the way by which we may arrive at an intimate union with God and so attain the highest possible sanctity.

Obedience of this kind, however, demands of us that our hearts should be open to superiors. This is affirmed with perfect clearness in the following words taken from the Constitutions, p. 4, c. 10, n. 5. "They shall treat their rector with great respect and reverence, as the vicar of Christ our Lord, with true obedience leaving to him the free disposal of themselves and of all they have, keeping nothing secret from him, no not even their own conscience which they must manifest to him at the appointed times and oftener if it shall seem good to the superior."

Upon this manifestation of conscience is grounded the whole force of our interior mode of government. Reverend Father Oliva unhesitatingly terms manifestation *the soul of our institute*.<sup>(25)</sup> Now if at times our manner of government seems rather exterior than interior, and therefore little in keeping with the mind of our holy Father, may not the cause be that the hearts of subjects are not open to those who are in authority? For if the souls of their subjects were clearly manifested to superiors, they would necessarily increase in their affection for those whom God's providence has entrusted to them, they would exercise a beneficent influence upon their souls and aid them to advance in perfection. Subjects in their turn by leaving to superiors the care of all their affairs, even the most intimate matters of soul, would enjoy great tranquillity of mind.

How much this would tend to preserve peace and union amongst us, it is not necessary to explain. For if once we are in possession of this tranquillity of mind, which gives us a fore-taste, as it were, of peace everlasting, we shall do our utmost to make others share in

<sup>(25)</sup> Epist. de secr. fide servanda.

our happiness and so preserve charity among our brethren. Then our houses will seem to be mansions of the blessed ; our hearts filled with love towards our brethren will be rendered most pleasing to that Divine Heart, which so burns with love for us.

This in truth is the object and end of devotion to the Sacred Heart that our hearts be made thus dear and acceptable to God. Those hearts alone are pleasing to God, which are united to Him, detached from creatures, even from self, wholly unfolded to superiors, and full of love for our brethren. If such virtues flourish in our hearts, there will be found in them also the beauty and splendor of an exalted and generous soul.

Now it is this magnanimity that will produce in us the greatest possible resemblance to the Heart of our divine Saviour, "For," as St. Bernard says, "I was not refashioned as easily as I was fashioned. . . . He spoke but one word in fashioning me, in refashioning he spoke much, 'tis true, but he also wrought wondrous and bore cruel, nay more, all shameful things." <sup>(26)</sup> "What then," continues the saint, with the royal psalmist, "shall I render to God for all that He has rendered to me?" <sup>(27)</sup> "In the first work he gave me to myself, in the second He gave Himself to me, and in giving Himself, He restored me to myself. Thus given and restored I am a debtor, yea twice a debtor, to Him for myself. What return shall I make to God for myself? for even if I could give myself back a thousand times, what am I to God?" <sup>(28)</sup>

What then shall we render to God? Assuredly, what our father St. Ignatius teaches us, when he tells us that those who have given themselves unreservedly to the service of God, should not merely be ready to submit to earnest labor, but should also be ready for the greater and more glorious undertakings which present themselves in this holy cause. <sup>(29)</sup> To these words of St. Ignatius Reverend Father Roothaan of pious memory adds the following: "Whose business is it, dearest Fathers and Brothers, if not ours, to be thus pre-eminent in the service and following of Christ our

<sup>(26)</sup> De dil. Deo c. 5, n. 15.

<sup>(27)</sup> Ps. cxv. 12.

<sup>(28)</sup> De dil. Deo.

<sup>(29)</sup> Ex. Spir. de Regno Christi.

King? Would that we understood this and understood it so well as to make us strive with earnest and strenuous perseverance to reach this perfection !”

Thus wrote he, who fifty years ago, with so much zeal for God’s glory and love for our institute governed the Society during one of the most troublous periods of its existence. Even now we seem to hear this great man addressing us in the same words from his grave, or I should rather say from his heavenly home ; exhorting us all, those especially amongst us who lived under his paternal rule ; entreating us to consecrate ourselves wholly and unreservedly to the Sacred Heart, for which he had such tender devotion ; and cheerfully to sacrifice for the love of God even our liberty.

Assuredly we ought to yield to these entreaties, coming as they do from him who was once our father. Of what value will other sacrifices be, if we refuse our maker the liberty, which He has Himself bestowed upon us? When we thus hold back the noblest part of our soul from God, what offering shall we make worthy of the Heart of the Son of God who emptied Himself<sup>(30)</sup> and delivered Himself for us<sup>(31)</sup> as a sheep led to the slaughter.<sup>(32)</sup>

I would not deny that what is here demanded of us is very difficult and toilsome, but it is our glorious privilege to battle manfully against what is so repugnant to human nature. Have we not at hand the most efficient aids for our weakness? To say nothing of other means, the Society has always been favored by the most sweet Heart of the Immaculate Virgin whose protection with God is most powerful. The Son of God has given the treasures of His graces to His mother, He has entrusted them to that maternal heart, whose love He Himself experienced while here on earth, and for which He in turn has the deepest affection. Now God wishes that we also may become the object of this mother’s love—and this is especially true since the time when our Lord offered His Heart for the worship of men. He then manifested His will that the most pure heart of Mary should be known and venerated as the unfailing source of heavenly blessings. Most willingly,

(30) Phil. ii. 7.

(31) Ephes. v. 2.

(32) Act. viii. 32.



therefore, do we sing the praises of the Mother of Mercy, our good mother ; placing her above all other creatures, and giving her such honor and love as to make it evident that we wish the Mother of God to hold in our hearts a place second to God alone.

It is, I am convinced, owing to this same loving mother that the Society has been chosen by Christ our Lord as His instrument in spreading the devotion to His Sacred Heart. Certain it is that she always favored St. Ignatius and that the Society has ever found in her a patroness kind and beneficent. Loyalty then to so good a mother, nay justice itself, obliges us to make known to the world the virtues which adorn her immaculate heart, and above all to proclaim her graciousness and clemency.

Through love for us the Heart of Jesus appears encircled with a crown of thorns ; we behold the Heart of Jesus opened with the lance, the heart of Mary pierced with the sword : but both wounds were caused by love rather than by the cruel iron. And in return for such boundless love what does the Son of God, what does His admirable Mother ask of us ? They ask for our hearts, they ask that poor and wretched though they be, we forever consecrate them to God.

Your hearts, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers, have been already consecrated to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, for to them has the whole Society solemnly pledged its love and loyalty. But as two hundred years have now passed since we were called to the work of teaching the people the wonderful means of salvation hidden in the Heart of our divine Redeemer, and as the Son of God has always desired the heart of His Mother to be united to His own, it is most fitting that this year the Society should renew its act of consecration to these Most Holy Hearts. The Society loves them, for they are the source of the great blessings we enjoy — in their mercy lies all hope of assistance, protection and defence, especially at this juncture when the dangers of these evil days threaten to overwhelm us.

Therefore do I request that the Provincials and Superiors of Missions on receipt of this letter determine when and by what exer-



cises of devotion they wish to testify their loyalty, love and gratitude to the Son of God and His most holy Mother. May the prayers of the whole Society awaken in us heavenly desires, ardor in furthering God's glory, and zeal and love for missions, especially among infidels and savages. May these prayers ward off dangers from our Provinces, Missions and Houses, and bring about our restoration to the houses from which we have been expelled ; may they preserve union, charity, obedience and all the other virtues of religion among us ; above all may they win for us the grace so precious to us all, of dying in the Society of Jesus, and of so living as to promote by every means in our power, the honor and worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, that honor and worship especially which our Lord in person explained and recommended above all others to His devoted servant Blessed Margaret Mary.

And finally, let us not forget that he will do a work most pleasing to the Heart of Jesus, who shall honor the sweetest heart of the Virgin Immaculate, by giving her the reverence her dignity demands and by showing her the love and devotion which are due to so loving a Mother.

Happy indeed, in my estimation, will be the lot of that member of our Society, who thus loves these Sacred Hearts with all the powers of his soul, and who spending himself in their service, gives his best energies to the work of spreading devotion to them as widely as possible in the hearts of his fellow men.

I recommend myself most earnestly to the prayers and holy sacrifices of all.

The servant of all in Christ,

ANTHONY MARY ANDERLEDY, S. J.

*Fiesole,*

*Feast of St. Michael the Archangel, 1888.*

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**XXVII.**

A LETTER OF OUR VERY REVEREND FATHER LEWIS MARTIN  
TO THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY ON SOME  
DANGERS OF OUR TIMES.

1. It has long been my wish, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, to afford you some consolation in the midst of the many labors you are engaged in for the salvation of souls ; and to exhort you most earnestly to advance with great strides in the service of God and to promote His glory far and wide with ever increasing zeal and fervor. I was urged to this by the great love with which I took you all to my heart when by a mysterious design of God's providence it pleased Him to place upon my shoulders the care of the whole Society ; I was urged to it by the strong affection with which " I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." <sup>(1)</sup> Would that it had been in my power to carry out my wish ! For after the close of the General Congregation I conceived an ardent desire of visiting you and of knowing all my brethren face to face ; of witnessing with my own eyes what you are so nobly doing and suffering for the glory of God, and of congratulating you on the same ; of soothing and solacing our cares in the interchange of the offices of fraternal charity ; in fine, of proving to you the great desire with which God is ever urging me on to see to it that we strongly guard the fortress of religion and as the true and genuine offspring of our Father, St. Ignatius, fight the battles of God with the unflinching fortitude with which he fought them.

2. But my wishes were frustrated by very grave reasons which each one of you can readily understand, if you reflect for a moment on the nature of my office. It remained then for me to hold converse with you by letter and to make known to you in writing what I would have said to each of you by word of mouth. Prudence however demanded that before addressing the whole Society,

<sup>(1)</sup> Phil. i. 8.

I should first gain a thorough knowledge of its present condition, ascertain what works were being carried on for the glory of God, what obstacles thwarted the success of its labors and what dangers in these our evil times were threatening us : which knowledge of course could come to me only as the fruit of considerable experience in the government of the Society. Now at last, thanks to the many letters I have received from all parts and the many affairs transacted and brought to an issue, I have arrived at a sufficiently thorough knowledge of the condition of the whole Society. Wherefore I have thought it expedient to put an end to the delay which up to this time has kept me from discharging this office of paternal charity.

3. And first of all, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, I call upon you to join me in giving all praise and thanks to God our Lord, the Father of mercies, who has deigned to regard with eyes of kindness this little Society of His Son and in these latter days "hath showed might in His arm" by shielding her with His divine power against the furious onslaught of her enemies and increasing and extending her in the teeth of many difficulties. For He who in His exceeding goodness and wisdom made use of His faithful servant Ignatius to raise her up from the foundation, He and He alone has deigned to call her back to life after her overthrow, "that He might show in the ages to come the abundant riches of His grace, in His bounty toward us in Jesus Christ."<sup>(2)</sup>

Not only was He pleased to raise the Society from the grave, He has also richly endowed her with His most gracious gifts, fostered and upheld her, spread her throughout the world and in a short time has brought her to such a marvellous condition as not only to strike our adversaries and fiercest enemies with astonishment but to fill our own souls with wonder.

We are indeed amazed at this incredible prosperity, and greatly do we rejoice to see her blessed with a more numerous offspring and extended more widely during these first eighty years than during the same number of years from the date of her first foundation.

<sup>(2)</sup> Ephes. ii. 7.

And I would not have you think, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, that I have said this by way of exaggeration or over-statement, for our archives, recording the number of houses and of members, prove the fact beyond a doubt. But to make the merciful protection and kindness of divine providence in the happy increase and spread of the Society still more apparent, it must be borne in mind, that in those early years after the foundation, when faith was everywhere strong and held firm sway in the hearts of men, our forefathers often enjoyed the protection and munificence of both peoples and rulers; that they could rely on the friendship of the Roman Pontiffs, of princes of the Church, bishops, kings, noblemen, magistrates, who built professed houses and churches; not only reared splendid colleges but also endowed them with rich revenues; promoted everywhere the work of our missions and supported them with the greatest generosity.

But a great change has taken place since the restoration of the Society. For the Church having been despoiled of all her wealth by her own rebellious children, even those who hold the highest dignities in the Church, though they still prove themselves most favorably disposed to the Society, have no longer the means of showing us that liberality which their predecessors in these same dignities were wont to exhibit toward us. And while secular princes and rulers of states have sometimes come to our assistance with aid and encouragement, very often too we have suffered at their hands all kinds of vexation and persecution. For many of them, tainted and captivated with those principles which are absurdly called "liberal," far from showing any favor to the Society or helping on her undertakings, have more than once waged an open and deadly war against her, carried on a pitiless persecution, besmirched her good name, robbed her of her property, driven her forth from their cities as if she were a deadly plague; in a word, have left nothing undone to wipe out her name from the memory of men. For the life therefore granted to us and which we are enjoying, for the roof that gives us shelter, for the marvellous abundance of vitality with which the tree of the Society puts forth



its branches and extends them far and wide, for the means of every kind with which we are supplied to labor for the glory of God and the salvation of souls : for all this our gratitude is due to God and to Him alone. Surely it is the duty of a noble, grateful heart to give full praise and thanks to Him for all the benefits He has hitherto lavished upon us ; to place in Him all our hopes together with a strong confidence that His ever present providence will not fail us in the future as it has not failed us in the past.

4. However, having discharged as it behooved me, this first and essential duty toward God who in His infinite goodness and mercy watches over the safety and increase of the Society, there remains for me another sacred obligation of gratitude, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, toward you who spare no toil or labor under the guidance of God's grace, to render yourselves fit instruments for doing the divine work of saving souls. And ought not a father to congratulate his children and rejoice that with such ardor and constancy they have consecrated their life and strength to this sublime work ? Indeed, when on reading the many letters which I daily receive from all parts of the world, I learn with what courage and zeal all our Fathers and Brothers strive to maintain the rights of God and of Holy Church and to spread the kingdom of Christ our Saviour in all lands, I cannot help being deeply touched and my heart goes out with great affection to each and every one and I thank them with my whole soul for all they are doing and suffering for the name of God. Would that I might mingle with you on the battle-field, fight side by side with you, and share your hardships and combats as well as your victories ! But since it has pleased our Lord God to dispose otherwise, I wish at least to give you this testimony of my paternal affection and gratitude for the many great things you are so bravely doing in order to give the highest glory within your power to our Saviour and King.

Rest assured, Reverend Fathers and beloved Brothers, that it is my greatest delight to think of you ; that while you are busy night and day in writing books, teaching school, preaching the

word of God, hearing confessions, traversing distant and barbarous countries, on land and sea, in peril and adversity, in suffering and labor, I am ever present with you in spirit if not in body ; that I deeply sympathize with you in your varying fortunes ; that I rejoice with you and weep with you ; that my best wishes and prayers attend your labors, and that the prayers and Masses which are daily said for me by the whole Society, are offered up for you with the intention that God in his bountiful goodness may strengthen and console His soldiers.

5. But to come to the special object of my letter. In order that your influence and power for good may never wane but ever retain its full vigor and from day to day bring forth more abundant fruit, I have deemed it to be the part of a father's providence, on the one hand to point out the dangers and to lay bare the snares which the foul enemy of the human race has prepared against you and by means of which he tries to catch you or at least to dim the lustre and diminish the merit of your good works ; on the other, to offer you some helps which may the better enable you to ward off these dangers.

6. Verily, this world in which you are living and laboring and exercising Christ's sacred ministry, does not look with indifference upon your efforts, nor suffer you with impunity to snatch from its grasp such precious spoils, but spurred on by the enemy of our souls, and seeing its opportunity in your very zeal for souls, lays its hidden snares and seeks with might and main to allure and deceive you without your even being aware of it. For the evil one is accustomed to make use of one kind of weapon in attacking those who follow the principles of the world and are the slaves of their passions ; and another kind against those, especially religious, who have consecrated themselves to the pursuit of heavenly things. For as St. Ignatius says : " In the case of those who go from mortal sin into mortal sin, the enemy is generally wont to place before their eyes apparent pleasures, bringing before their imagination sensual gratification and pleasures, in order to keep them fast and to plunge

them deeper into their vices and sins.”<sup>(3)</sup> “Contrariwise, it is peculiar to the bad angel, transfiguring himself into an angel of light, to enter with the devout soul, and to come out his own way ; that is to say, to begin by inspiring good and holy thoughts in conformity with the disposition of the just soul, and afterwards gradually to endeavor to gain his end, by drawing the soul into his secret snares and perverse intentions.”<sup>(4)</sup>

For the same reason our Holy Father in explaining in the meditation “on Two Standards” in what manner the devil makes war on those who follow the army of Christ, warns us that the enemy has by no means inscribed on his standard things sinful and wicked, such as the pleasures of the flesh, unbridled greed of wealth, revolt against the majesty of God and contempt of His law, but rather objects in themselves indifferent, the use of which cannot be held intrinsically bad but which paves the way for sin and prepares his ruin who suffers himself to be caught in such snares. Nay this crafty enemy, not content with such artifices, not only places before the eyes of the unwary indifferent objects that are in themselves free from all guilt, but goes so far in his fraud, that he disguises himself in the garb of an angel of light, suggesting to us things that are good in themselves and seem to make for virtue, and thus with most subtle craft secretly and stealthily leads his victim into hidden snares. Hence the necessity of cautious watchfulness ; of a careful scrutiny of this wicked world in which we live ; of seeing through the artifices of which the devil makes use ; of being thoroughly acquainted with the indifferent or good objects by means of which he so often endeavors to allure us and to bring us under his power.

7. And here we must carefully note that while the enticements he uses to draw us into sin are always of the same nature, yet in form and appearance they are as various as they are innumerable. For the artful deceiver is wont to suit himself to the times, conditions and manners of each country and to adapt his snares to the

<sup>(3)</sup> Rules for the discernment of spirits for the first week, Rule 1.

<sup>(4)</sup> Rules for the second week, Rule 4.



character and circumstances of the individual. Hence the question arises in what peculiar manner the inveterate enemy assaults god-fearing men in our own days and in the modern conditions of life and how he harasses those who have consecrated themselves to God and to the apostolic ministry. In my opinion there are, if I mistake not, two main lines of attack which I would have you imprint deeply in your minds in order to guard against them with the utmost care : for nothing could be more baneful or more dangerous than to consider them harmless or to overlook them entirely as undeserving of notice.

8. The first is a natural levity of mind and character which is wont to be the chief obstacle that prevents those solid truths that ought to rule our lives from striking deep roots in the soul, with the result that the mind, thus destitute of a sure and fixed rule of action, becomes unsteady and changeable in forming judgments of things, fickle and inconstant in undertaking and carrying them out. Now such a turn of mind will naturally develop into a habit, and hence a religious who leads this kind of life will be ever craving for fresh excitement, ever bent upon seeing and reading something new, will be moved to action by the glamour of outward objects, in a word, in place of God and the laws of our Institute he will take the natural impulse of the senses as his rule of action.

The second is a specious love of that noble liberty the Almighty has implanted in our souls, which, however, when misunderstood, gives a handle to license, and becoming impatient of the bridle of authority, seeks to throw off all restraint.

This false love of liberty at first indeed conceals itself under the cloak of a certain loftiness of nature, but little by little it leads us gently on and unconsciously accustoms us to criticise and pass judgment on everything and to follow no other rule of thought or action than our own opinion. We shall see later on what grievous evils flow from this. At present we will treat of that levity of mind and character which, unless we are on our guard, is fraught with the greatest dangers for our scholastics while they are pursuing their studies ; dangers for our Fathers when going



abroad in the exercise of the sacred ministry, unless they faithfully strive to attend to the duties of their office ; dangers for those whose employments keep them engaged at home, if neglecting to devote themselves wholly to God and to their work they waste their time in reading trashy and trifling literature.

9. In the first place this cunning enemy of the human race at the very threshold of their religious life suggests to our young scholastics the necessity of science for the defence of truth and religion ; the necessity, I say, of that multifarious, shallow science, which is called *encyclopedic*, a science which the Church's foes abuse in attacking her. Now as this science comprises many different departments of great diversity, our scholastics are liable to be assailed by this dangerous temptation : They will wish to depart from our time-honored and approved *Ratio Studiorum* and to be content with a mere smattering of the studies that have always been taught in our schools, so as to be free to give the best of their talent and the most precious hours of their time to the modern sciences. But it is not hard to see into what delusions this fatal error will lead them.

For the field of modern science is so vast and comprises so many specialties that a thorough and solid grasp of even a single one would demand a man's whole life-time. The necessary consequence therefore would be that he who should undertake to embrace them all, would acquire a true and thorough knowledge neither of the old nor of the new sciences, but would varnish his mind and cram his memory with some flimsy and flashy notions in each of them. This is one of the pitfalls into which our wily enemy in these our days strives to drag us. And you will not call this a fanciful picture, the dream of an over-excited and timid imagination, if you will only examine for a moment what sort of training boys now-a-days receive at home and what system of education in letters and sciences prevails in colleges and universities. For the effeminate character of home-training and the shallowness of public school education almost pass belief and have become the subject of our daily complaint.

10. This levity of mind is fostered and encouraged from early days by that delicacy of body which, in the opinion of men of experience, growing apace and bearing a punier offspring, renders the nervous system more and more excitable. And thus it comes to pass that our youth are becoming indolent, hare-brained and unfit for the battle of life ; and far from seeking vigorous mental exertion they shrink from all serious effort of body and mind and are ever looking for relaxation and comfort. Small wonder that this evil propensity of nature brings forth in our day the most lamentable results, since the home-training, which is of paramount influence for good as well as for evil, seeing that it is for the most part soft, inconsistent, mainly bent on satisfying and pleasing the child's whims and flattering his passions that grow apace with the body's growth, only develops levity of mind while debilitating and enervating the will.

The subsequent college discipline and literary education are altogether incapable of remedying the many faults committed in this effeminate domestic training. It ought to be indeed the province of the school to oppose a stout resistance against the follies of early home training and to fashion the yet tender hearts of boys to virtue and implant in their minds some few sound and solid principles. These having once struck root, would, like noble shoots grafted on a wild tree, bear in due time the most happy fruit and by their irresistible power influence the whole after-life. But our complaint is that the contrary result is brought about in consequence of the insane method of teaching and the foolish system of education which are almost everywhere forced upon us.

For the whole plan of modern studies tends to this that in a brief span of years boys shall receive a slight sprinkling not only of letters but of almost all the sciences. They come forth from college little encyclopedias, as the saying is, and having skimmed the surface of the whole field of all the sciences, they possess of all this nothing solid : a little of everything, on the whole nothing. It thus comes to pass that this system of teaching feeds the boy's vanity instead of sharpening his wits ; instead of imparting to

him the great principles which are the foundation of literary culture and would little by little make a man of him, his curiosity is excited and in his conceited ignorance he is emboldened to pronounce rash judgments on matters of which he understands nothing.

11. Now it is this kind of education that our enemy would represent to us as something superior; to it he tries with all his might to win us over, straining his utmost to persuade us to train our young scholastics according to the methods and programmes enforced in the public schools,—an education which loses in solidity, to the great detriment of the student, what it boasts of gaining in the variety of subjects of instruction; which grasps at much and achieves but little; which fosters the vanity of a ready tongue, but is incapable of imparting the power of reasoning correctly and closely, or of discoursing nicely on any subject; which, in fine, begets conceited sciolists instead of wise and learned men. Would it not then be the height of folly and insanity to be caught in such a snare?

12. I am not unaware, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers, of the persuasion which the arch-deceiver craftily uses to drive us at length into a course fraught with dire disaster. While it cannot be denied, he says, that the system of studies now in vogue in colleges and universities embraces so many branches that the young men who attempt to study them can scarcely acquire more than a trifling and superficial knowledge in each, yet on the other hand, it is an acknowledged fact that in the specialties which they afterwards take up, many attain an eminence and distinction for learning which make it a necessity for us to check their irreligious influence. For this reason, he continues, it behooves us to meet them on their own ground, study the same specialties according to the same methods, and, equipped with the self-same weapons as themselves, become masters in the very line of attack that they make use of in their cruel war against the Church of God.

13. But I must candidly and openly avow that they who would so far yield to the crafty enemy as to speak in this fashion, either



talk without reflection or are simply laboring under a manifest delusion. For, as it is absurd to suppose that all Ours could excel in all kinds of learning, there can be question only of attaining superiority in some special branch. If therefore they merely mean that without curtailing in the least the studies prescribed in the Society, some of Ours who happen to be endowed with singularly superior talent, should be applied to the study or more thorough review of one particular branch of learning, we declare that this is our own desire also and an object which we all have sincerely at heart. However, we are not on this account called upon either to abandon or to remodel our old *Ratio Studiorum*, which, as familiar experience bears witness, is undoubtedly an admirable preparation as well as a powerful aid towards a thorough and masterful attainment of any new branch of learning that may chance to be of importance. But if any, entrapped by the deceits of the devil and captivated by the charms of novelty, should maintain that the studies proper to the Society must be neglected for the cultivation of others less peculiarly ours ; that philosophy must give place to the natural sciences ; theology to philology, history, and the like ; in a word, that the philosopher, the theologian, and the canonist must stand second to the mathematician, the naturalist, and the astronomer,—there is no one of sound mind who does not see therein a deception of the most serious and damaging nature. For, to say nothing of other weighty considerations which might be mentioned, it is evident on the face of it that such reasoning is at variance with our Constitutions which ought to be for us the one supreme rule of action. And even if our Institute were not so rigid in its legislation on this matter, would it not be forbidden by the very nature and condition of our vocation? For we are priests and religious : but a thorough study of the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church is not only inseparable from the training of the priest and the religious, but its very foundation, to which all other sciences, as its humble hand-maids, must yield the first place. Sad, indeed, would it be, not to say shameful, for a son of the Society to bid farewell to sacred science in order to devote him-



self entirely to profane learning ; and to let things come to such a pass that outsiders would visit him only when they wanted to speak on vain and idle topics, but should be forced to go elsewhere to obtain a better knowledge of revealed truths, to have their doubts settled, or to discover the means of more plainly detecting and refuting error.

14. Rightly therefore did the last General Congregation, following in the footsteps of former Congregations, earnestly recommend anew that all Ours should devote themselves to the serious and solid study of the old scholastic theology ; and consequently made the decree that "for a right maintainance of our course of theology, with all the different treatises to which it extends, as well as the method and order to be followed in taking them up, we must carefully and diligently insist on a faithful carrying out of all that is prescribed in the *Ratio Studiorum*."<sup>(5)</sup> Nay, more, to observe to the letter the prescriptions of the Institute in a matter of such vital moment, the same Congregation would not permit moral theology to be taught entirely after the manner of casuistry, prescribing in the same decree "that moral theology also be taught accurately and solidly : wherefore those questions that contain the principles of moral science are to be treated after the scholastic method, and some of them are to be assigned both for the annual examination in dogma, and for the examination *ad gradum*."<sup>(6)</sup>

Evidently the Congregation felt how much it concerned the Society to oppose a stout resistance to the extravagant desire for novelty which has seized upon the minds of all and to use every effort to ward off such a spirit from the Society. For, in this way only shall we preserve ourselves intact from that intellectual levity which is the characteristic of the times in which we live, and which is the root of that moral levity whereunto our enemy is striving to draw us. By this means alone shall we obtain that our young men "be not carried about by every wind of doctrine." This is the only way in which we shall be able to labor successfully for the salvation of souls according to our Institute,

<sup>(5)</sup> Decr. 24, § 2.

<sup>(6)</sup> Decr. 24, § 5.

without at the same time exposing ourselves to the danger of going astray and, perhaps, as sad experience teaches, even of losing vocation and faith alike.

15. The crafty enemy of the human race understands all this very well, and therefore leaves nothing untried to lead us into moral levity through that intellectual levity which, as I have just said, is its root and origin. But not content with these schemes, he also employs other stratagems wherewith to ensnare us ; and under the specious pretext of zeal for the good of souls, he does his best to cause us to adopt a manner of life so utterly taken up with and engrossed in things of the outer world, that they who are triflers find therein an agreeable opportunity of gratifying their curiosity and vanity.

To compass this end he heaps up difficulties from the very beginning of our religious life, and raises obstacles of all kinds to hinder us from laying a solid foundation of religious education ; and, sad to say, his efforts are now in a large measure attended with success. For, owing to the evil condition of the times in which we live, we are constrained to omit many of those novitiate experiments that possess such power and efficacy both to test and to strengthen the virtue of our novices. Later on the laws of military conscription which exist in many countries force our young scholastics from our colleges to the barracks, and in a short time the happy fruits of virtue gathered with such labor and care, are ravaged and destroyed amid the distractions and unsavory influences of the army.

To these pernicious schemes furnished to him by our own times, he adds the old ones, which have been well tested by constant service. Among these may be reckoned, on the one hand, that spiritual dryness so commonly experienced after a protracted course of studies ; and, on the other hand, a general lack of control over the mind and senses which not unfrequently shows itself in colleges on account of unrestrained intercourse with students and people of the world. By all these means and others of a like character the enemy usually succeeds in weakening the spirit and

giving a shock to the virtue of his victims, so that having sufficiently impaired their strength of soul, he makes them throw themselves boldly and rashly into the ministry in the hope that once they are immersed in the distractions of the world, his triumph over them may be complete.

16. And here I would have you observe that the devil, ever faithful to his old tactics, does not usually at the outset of this new career, tempt his victims with bad and sinful objects, but with things that seem to be good and noble and works that are particularly conducive to the salvation of souls. And so he pictures to them the pitiful condition in which men are living, the muddy stream of wickedness and crime that is flooding all lands, the imperative call that presses upon us of stemming with all our might this tide of irreligion and licentiousness, thus affording to perishing souls a secure haven of safety. To this end he shows them a variety of priestly offices they ought to undertake: such as establishing sodalities, fostering works of piety, instructing the ignorant, assisting the poor, visiting the sick. They are impressed and allured by such pictures, and, inflamed as they are with ardent zeal for souls, they hasten to take up works of this kind with the eagerness and generosity which is so common to young men, and throw themselves into the work reckless of time and strength. And so soon as they have given themselves wholly up to it, he whispers to them that those who have gone astray and are immersed in the affairs of the world, must not be attacked with blunt directness, but that it is necessary to make prudent allowance for their character and their peculiar environment, that following the apostle's advice we ought to make ourselves all things to all men, rejoice with the rejoicing, weep with the weeping, come to the relief of all, in order to win them all to Christ. Now all these things are in truth very holy and would go very far in promoting the glory of God, were they not turned into a channel that is entirely foreign to our Institute. But either by a natural bent of character or by the instigation of the evil spirit it easily comes to pass that while falling in with the ways of those with whom they deal in familiar



intercourse, they also insensibly get accustomed to do things that are scarcely becoming the religious life they profess : they mix themselves up in the affairs and cares of others and while trying to help them, in the end neglect their own souls. And when, caught in the devil's snares, they have once entered upon this perilous path, they will easily come to look upon religious discipline not as a help toward procuring the salvation of souls with greater security and efficacy, but rather as a hindrance ; and so they will try to escape from the direction of Superiors, undertake things without their knowledge, visit private houses without prudence or discrimination ; if anything new or sensational happens they must see, hear, read it, pry into it ; in a word, they will lead the life of a religious in outward semblance and manner, but by no means in interior spirit and conduct.

17. When things have reached this point, any one who will but open his eyes cannot help seeing that the foul fiend has been at work with his dark and treacherous tricks. But the worst of the evil is this, that in consequence of the thoughtless levity of which we have been speaking, even the first and fundamental principles of the religious life and the obligations springing therefrom, become little by little dimmed in the mind and are almost forgotten : so that they who are thus pitifully hoodwinked by Satan cannot see what is perfectly clear to all other eyes. Thus they are happy enough to belong to a religious order, live in a community and exercise the ministry of the Society—but according to their own ideas, at their own choice and to the neglect of the rules of the religious life to which, at God's call, they have bound themselves. Common life, regular discipline, the rule of having a companion when going out, the prescriptions of the Institute as to our intercourse with externs and epistolary correspondence with them ; the rules laid down which require us to undertake and carry on works of zeal only according to the will and under the guidance of Superiors : all these things, they fancy, are praiseworthy enough and very commendable in themselves ; but not to the extent that it would be wrong to set them aside when they prove a hindrance



to the work of saving souls, which must go on at any cost. The reason is that they have never thoroughly grasped the essential importance of these things, and are not really convinced that by disregarding them they are imperilling not only their vocation but even their souls' salvation : for it is a settled conviction with them, that they are sure to act aright as long as they have the intention to do good and that this good intention ennobles and sanctifies even the most imprudent actions. To such heights of foolhardiness they are led on by their thoughtless levity !

18. This danger of too much absorption in exterior things which arises from the spirit of levity has, I am well aware, always existed and will never cease to exist in any religious order bound by its Institute to lead an active life ; but believe me, dearly beloved Fathers and Brothers, this evil is growing apace owing to the condition of the times in which we live. For besides the causes springing from that shallow levity just mentioned, which are peculiar to our times, there are many others : the dispersion or abnormal condition of many provinces which scarcely allows of many of our works to be carried on according to the laws of the Institute ; the large number of small houses and *quasi*-parishes in which it is difficult to enforce regular discipline and where customs are introduced that are more or less at variance with our manner of life ; the loss and spoliation of our churches compelling Ours in many places to leave our houses every day and seek other churches if they wish to work for souls ; the condition of those on whose behalf we exercise the sacred ministry, who often hold their meetings neither in sacred places where the faithful are wont to assemble for worship, nor at the customary hours, but at uncertain hours and in places at a distance from the church, as their manner of living makes it convenient ; finally, the shameful corruption of morals, which is spreading far and wide and insidiously threatening even us with dangers from which Superiors are often powerless to protect us : all these causes and many others which for the sake of brevity I here pass over in silence, bring the danger more and

more close to our doors ; the danger, I say, to which our Fathers are exposed to-day through the spirit of levity.

19. For this reason my predecessor of happy memory, Father Anderledy, following in the footsteps of other Generals and of St. Ignatius himself, pointed out, in his letters, this great injury that might befall the Society, and never ceased urging the holy rules of the Institute which stand as a wall against this spirit, particularly the rule of the companion, a rule which alone is a more powerful means to ward off these countless evils than many others together. Nay, the last General Congregation while seriously considering many of the points just mentioned as very necessary for the safeguard of regular discipline, earnestly recommended them to the watchful care of Superiors and especially to the General, urging them to enforce their conscientious observance upon all and bidding them to slacken in no wise the severity demanded by the Institute. For my part, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, I should deem myself guilty of grievous dereliction of duty and responsible for the ruin of many, did I not strive with all the energy I possess, to bring about the absolute observance of these sacred injunctions and sound the alarm against the plots of our implacable enemy. For it were criminal folly to deceive ourselves and to lull ourselves into a fancied security.

True, our Lord God in His goodness has ever supplied by His grace every help and protection whenever the rules and laws of the Institute which so abundantly provide us with our spiritual armor, could not be observed in their integrity either in consequence of popular uprisings against us or by reason of the peculiar nature of the ministry committed to us by holy obedience, such as missions to the heathen countries. But when we are dwelling in peaceful security in our colleges and residences and yet wilfully despise and disregard our rules, Almighty God will not supply for our infidelity by His grace, far from it, but by a just judgment often permits us to be so violently assaulted by the devil and so strongly tempted against our vocation that in the end we may unhappily lose it.

20. Nor is it any less likely, believe me, that this terrible calamity may menace those who allow themselves to be carried away by the spirit of levity. For the deplorable results which usually follow in its train have always, and to-day no less than in former times, paved the way for a catastrophe. And indeed, a religious whose mind is not governed by stern and steadfast resolve and whose will-power has long lain torpid in the bonds of unmanly self-indulgence, will become the play-thing of the affections of the senses and be tossed about by their changeful fickleness. Such men will run after employments that are agreeable to the senses, roam abroad looking for distractions, seek that solace in childish trifles which they fail to find in serious and useful work. And as long as they trouble themselves with these frivolities, they will make but vain attempts to come closer to God by meditation on the things of heaven and exercises of piety. For in men of this stamp the well-spring of spiritual consolation, which flows from prayer and holy meditation, must dry up ; wherefore all exercises of piety by which others are lifted up and strengthened, only prove distasteful and irksome to them. And thus little by little they tire of meditation, examination of conscience and all spiritual matters, apply their minds to them but reluctantly, go through them indolently and without spirit and in a perfunctory manner. God grant that they may not in the end entirely give them up ! Which indeed would carry them to the very brink of spiritual ruin. But the most deplorable and pernicious of these evils is that the grievous injuries which flow from this wandering and straying of mind and heart, as effects from their causes, in their turn add fuel to these same causes, enkindle and inflame them ever more and more. For nature has fashioned us in such wise that the heart needs some prop and support to lean upon, which, if it finds not in God, it will seek among men ; and if heavenly consolations be wanting, it will turn to things of earth. Hence that craving for the things of earth ; that unrestrained liberty of the senses ; that unquenchable thirst for creature-comforts ; that aversion for silence and solitude ; that dislike of the cloister ; that ungovernable desire of appearing before



the public ; hence those frequent visits to the houses of seculars and too frequent conversations with externs not about God and the salvation of their souls, but about foolish and perhaps even dangerous trifles ; hence a love of travelling and an eager curiosity to visit art galleries, museums and public monuments. Now going to such places and looking at objects which it is sinful to gaze at, constitutes a grave danger to one's purity ; but it also causes surprise and scandal in others who have good reason to be shocked when they see a religious walk into a place from which prudence would bid even seculars to stay away. Small wonder then if base appetites are fanned into life again, if inordinate concupiscence which had been brought under by solitude and mortification of the flesh and especially by assiduous prayer, rebels and re-opens a war more savage than before and thus endangers even one's vocation. Small wonder if this immoderate inclination for the comforts of life and for dissipation of mind renders religious discipline, which was formerly so sweet, irksome and annoying. Small wonder if the yoke of obedience, formerly sweet and light, becomes unbearable the moment a difficult task that is unpleasant to sensuality is imposed. Small wonder if sadness, annoyance, weariness, excuses, murmurings, and other vices of no small moment increase from day to day, all of which our Holy Father condemns in his letter on obedience. Small wonder that a religious in this frame of mind will receive the Superior's behests with bad grace, refuse obedience, and in the end make shipwreck of his vocation.

Such are, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, the lamentable effects which usually arise in the exercise of our ministries from levity of character together with contempt of rules. It is true that not all those who fall into the enemy's snares are carried to the extreme of making shipwreck of their vocation, but experience bears witness that this is the steep path down which they travel, and unless they recover themselves in the middle of the journey on which they have started, they will be hurried into a fatal abyss. For if we are to judge of the tree by the fruit it bears, their reckless lev-



ity producing such fruit, assuredly is proven to be a death-bearing tree.

21. The evils I have described, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers, are formidable enough to strike terror into the soul of any man ; and we trust in the infinite mercy of God that they may never find entrance into the Society. But our enemy has other snares which at first sight do not appear to be so harmful and for that reason might find a readier entrance amongst us, though in truth they bear the same deadly fruit and often lead to the same fatal end : for they feed and foster that spirit of levity from which we have everything to fear. And our wily enemy is equally well pleased, whether he uses one kind of weapon or another, if he but attain his end. Hence he tempts some of the laborers in Christ's vineyard, carried away by this thoughtless spirit of levity, to make light of the laws wisely enacted in the Society for the purpose of rendering our works of zeal more fruitful and less dangerous ; that so, having circumvented them with his crafty schemes, he may compass their utter destruction. On the other hand, accustomed as he is to turn his ingenuity to every sort of wicked stratagem, he endeavors to prevent others that are likewise influenced by the same reckless levity, from ever seriously reflecting that Ours are bound by the most sacred obligation to spend themselves and their whole strength for the glory of God ; but induces them to amuse themselves with foolish trifles and to fritter away the time that belongs to God, in reading periodicals, newspapers and novels. This indeed is a danger which is not peculiar to our times but common to all, because the devil and sensuality, leagued together from the beginning, have always joined forces to entice men away from toil and care to a life of easy comfort. But in our day, in the midst of the flood of newspapers and periodicals that are being poured into town and country alike, so that they can scarcely be kept from invading even the cloister be it ever so closely guarded ; the danger is greater than ever before, lest we too, yielding to the spirit of the age, choose a life of ease rather than a life of toil.

22. But what is better adapted and more effective for keeping us faithful to duty and for arousing us to strenuous efforts, than frequently to reflect upon and fix deeply in our minds the most noble end for which we above all others have been divinely singled out and called? So wonderful a disposition on the part of God and such singular good will in our regard were surely not intended to the end that we should lead an idle and ignoble life, but that generously despising all the comforts of life, we should spare neither pains, nor labor, nor even life itself to gain souls to God. Call to mind, I beg you, dearest Fathers and Brothers, the watchings, the tears, the labor and fatigue, the insults and wounds, and the blood these souls have cost our Most Holy Redeemer! And shall we then think that we can be companions of Christ in this divine work of the Redemption, unless we follow in His footsteps, and be emulators of His labors? It ill becomes us to remain idle and to behold in sluggish apathy so great a loss of souls. It ill becomes us to refuse assistance to the souls of our brethren in peril, and to suffer unmoved the blood of Christ to be deprived of its effect, while we seek our amusement in empty trifles and foolish reading. We must therefore stand on our guard and greatly fear, lest we be led away from this most important of duties, while newspapers and periodicals claim from us that time which we owe in its entirety to God and to the souls redeemed by Him.

23. That this danger might be averted from the Society, the 22nd Congregation in its 15th Decree recommended Father General carefully to provide against the creeping in of any abuse in so grave a matter, and to set limits within which the reading of such newspapers and periodicals should be confined. Later on, my predecessor of happy memory, Father Beckx, in the year 1860, raising his voice to complain of this abuse, pointed out in the following weighty words the evils which could spring therefrom to the Society. "How we should grieve, nay more, what fears should we not entertain not only for our spirit, but even for our very vocation, if Ours also should fall into the fault which we have

remarked with sorrow in so many seculars of this our age, namely, that slighting or setting aside altogether the pursuit of serious studies, and neglecting the reading of works in which the sciences are solidly and learnedly treated, they should lose time as precious as it is short in skimming over every book and periodical of what kind soever that may chance to fall into their hands. The effect of such reading must be to dissipate the powers of the soul, enervate the heart, and far from cultivating the mind, to stuff it with mere information on a variety of subjects. Let this then be the care of Superiors, Spiritual Fathers, and Prefects of Studies, that Ours, especially those who have less experience, be not only not permitted to choose for themselves the books they read, but that at the same time they receive proper instruction as to what is profitable, what hurtful in this matter of reading. In this way they will be led to eschew reading which if not harmful is at least trashy and of little service, and of their own accord turn their attention to those studies of which I have spoken, studies at once useful and worthy of our vocation.”<sup>(7)</sup>

24. And here I would have you carefully notice, that in the words just cited there is not question merely of bad newspapers or periodicals, which, as is evident, according to our Constitutions should not so much as cross our thresholds, but also of good or indifferent reading matter, from which, however, the evils just spoken of may follow. Wherefore, in the special ordinations which Father Beckx that same year approved of for many provinces,—ordinations which are still in force—he deplores and condemns an abuse even in the reading of Catholic papers. And rightly so: for those who have the habit of giving themselves immoderately to such reading, are turned away from all serious application to those studies which are for us a necessity, and, in a special sense, peculiarly our own, and day by day grow more averse to those books from which we should drink in piety and science. So true is this, that if—which may God avert!—the Society or any Province should open its doors to this evil by permitting such reading indiscriminately to

<sup>(7)</sup> Ep. ad Prov. Soc., 5 Febr. 1860.



all, we should after a short time look in vain for great teachers or eminent professors to direct the education of our youth. The magnificent works of Doctors who have filled the whole world with their fame, would lie covered with unseemly dust in the corners of our libraries. There would be no one to read them and to rescue them from oblivion, while newspapers and trashy books would be in the hands of all. There would be no more sound theologians, solid and really eloquent preachers, learned writers : for such men are formed not by superficial reading but by serious and unremitting study. But if by a depth of ignominy scarcely credible, which I trust God will far remove from us, our doors were to be thrown open to newspapers of a doubtful character, what a danger would confront us ! To how many and what great errors would the minds of Ours be imperceptibly and little by little exposed ! How disgraceful it would be to forget those illustrious men whom God has given us for masters, and to fall to such depths of baseness, as to surrender ourselves to the teaching of every unlearned and shallow writer, or rather scribbler, who rashly prates about the most difficult questions as well religious as social,—venal men who hold all things at a price, loyalty, religion, truth, duty, all that is noble in our nature ; men who are wont to make traffic of all things with their pen and to suit their writings to the fancy or passion of him who buys.

25. But even if the mind were not to take harm from the habitual reading of such literature, yet will the soul always suffer grievous damage. It cannot well be, when the head is daily rendered dull and heavy by notions as vain and ridiculous as they are utterly foreign to and inconsistent with our religious life, but that the soul will grow weak, and the imagination, aroused and agitated by so many phantasms, will often obtrude upon the mind images impressed from without. For a religious thus violently withdrawn from heavenly things, all that is spiritual and divine will no longer possess any relish. They will no longer afford solace and help, but will become irksome and produce only disgust



and torment. From these beginnings will flow all those consequences which have been already described at length.

26. Nor are less evils to be feared for our ministries than for mind and soul, as I intimated above. The active life to which we have devoted ourselves in the Society, is surely to be nourished and sustained by other food of knowledge and doctrine than that supplied it by newspapers and novels. It demands a nobility and strength of soul which are not to be expected from trivial and trashy reading. Would it not then be the greatest crime and impiety, if, unmindful of our vocation and the exalted end of the Society which our Holy Father wished "to be instituted for the general good and the profit of souls,"<sup>(8)</sup> we should not feel ashamed to lie torpid in unworthy idleness? If, degenerate sons of our forefathers, who by unheard of labors added so many cities, peoples, kingdoms to the empire of Christ, we should spend our lifetime in reading books more suited to driving away weariness and gratifying curiosity than acquiring learning and fostering piety? If, thinking only of our personal comfort, we should allow souls redeemed by Christ to rush headlong to destruction? Would it not be of all things the saddest and most miserable, if on the awful day of judgment there should rise up to accuse us the many men who might have been saved by us from eternal loss, had we but bestowed on the ministries proper to our vocation the time which we each day spent in reading newspapers and foolish books?

27. But, answers our adversary, you, the sons of the Society, unlike Carthusians or Benedictines, are not destined to live in solitary retreats and deserts. You are called to the great cities and to instruct all classes of men. You must, therefore, have a thorough acquaintance with the state of society and the spirit of our times, that so you may obtain easy access to all. Adroitly beginning with worldly topics, you can then pass to those which are divine, and in this way you will gently and more effectively draw to yourselves all classes of men, each according to his bent. And so this kind of reading is for you a necessity.

(8) Const. P. III, cap. 1.

Add to this, that since all these things are by no means bad but of their very nature indifferent, when elevated by your good intention and endowed with a supernatural nobility, they become the most powerful of helps for the salvation of souls.

Thus speaks our enemy. Now this line of reasoning at the most proves only, that all such papers and books are not to be absolutely forbidden to all Ours, but that to some of our Fathers upon whom devolves the duty of refuting even in writing the errors everywhere prevalent, there should be committed the charge of reading the public journals in which such errors are circulated and defended. It proves also that *some* of Ours who are engaged in external ministries or are treating of business affairs which appertain to the government of the Society, can derive fruit from such reading, provided they use that moderation which our Congregations and Generals so often commend. But who could ever infer that such reading is to be permitted all Ours, and that every sort of newspaper and periodical should gain admission into our houses? Who could tolerate that without any restrictions each day many hours should be spent, or to speak more truly, lost, in such reading? Another consideration will place this point in still clearer evidence. If those who wasted their time on such trifles and took pleasure in these items of news, were of our most zealous laborers, of those, namely, who above all others are active and energetic in diligently performing the duties committed to them by obedience, who in the pulpit and the sacred tribunal, in prisons and hospitals, in teaching the rudiments of our faith to children and the ignorant, in directing and promoting sodalities, in explaining the Spiritual Exercises, give their untiring efforts to gaining souls to God, then might the excuse offered present some appearance of truth and honesty. But if things were quite otherwise, if our *operarii* on account of such reading should neglect their ministry, if Superiors should set less store by domestic discipline, if professors and teachers should go to class without preparation, if sacred orators, lacking carefully composed sermons and wanting in the other necessary qualifications for their office, should

preach *ex tempore*, if Spiritual Fathers should give a cold reception to those who come to see them, and dismiss them with a few words, if I say, such were the conduct of the habitual readers of newspapers and periodicals, would it not manifestly show that they do not seek in them the means of carrying out the duties of their offices more fitly and becomingly, but rather an outlet for self-indulgence and the gratification of their vanity and curiosity? Would they not clearly prove by their own testimony how wisely and opportunely our Congregations and Generals have acted in placing restrictions on such reading?

28. We shall find still stronger reason for this in the fact, that besides the many and serious damages which we rightly fear for individuals and our ministries, yet greater evils are to be anticipated for whole houses and Provinces, and, consequently, for the entire body of the Society. For what could happen more baneful or more fatal to our Society, than if that most close bond of agreement and charity which unites the members each to the other and all with the head, were loosened? Now, all are aware how powerful newspapers and other writings of this kind are for disturbing the minds and exciting the passions of those who are addicted to reading them. It cannot but come to pass that once they have grown used to reading them, they will in the course of time be actuated and guided by their spirit, so that they are led to think after the fashion of the papers they read; they pronounce the same judgments; they praise and blame what is praised and blamed by these papers; they defend what is defended by them, they attack what is attacked by them. This we see demonstrated among men of the world by daily experience, which affords evident testimony that there is no class of men, not even the most upright and prudent, nay, not even the most pious, who escape unscathed the powerful influence of the press. Now among the many controversies which spring up from time to time to divide men's opinions and to arouse and keep alive general interest, there are not a few which touch at once both political and religious topics. Discussed in the public journals, they violently excite even Catholics, separate them into



opposing factions, inflame them angrily against one another, and with no small loss to charity and even propriety urge them to take up arms which seem furnished rather by enmity and hatred than by zeal for the defence of Catholic truth. What sad evils would befall religious houses, if unfortunately they were once invaded by this spirit of partisan strife and fierce rage which sooner or later take possession of all who are given to the habit of reading newspapers? But for our Society especially, what ruin should we not fear from such a pest? What would become of the rule by which we are all commanded to think, to speak, as far as possible, the same thing, according to the Apostle, so that not only are different doctrines not to be admitted either by word, in public discourses, or by written books, but even diversity of views on matters of business is, as far as can be, to be avoided? What would become of fraternal charity and union, which cannot exist where there is difference of opinion, opposition of will and sentiment, disagreement as to the lines on which we are to carry out our work? What would become of religious simplicity; of gentlemanly manners, of easy intercourse and common life, of united efforts, of mutual confidence, if, in order not to hurt the feelings or opinions of others, we had to practise continual dissimulation to conceal our own sentiments, and in word, sign and look stand carefully on our guard in all points on which we are at variance?

29. May God in His goodness and mercy avert so great a calamity from our most loving mother, the Society, who has taken us to her bosom, has nourished and cherished us all with the same solicitude, has placed us all beneath the shelter of the same laws, has educated us with the same care, sparing neither pain nor expense, has surrounded us with the same love and has destined us all for the same sublime end. On our part, dearest Fathers and Brothers, out of the filial love with which it behooves us to repay the affection of so illustrious a mother, we should fight with all our strength against the devil's artifices and unmask his frauds. The whole aim of the first class of snares which up to the present I have been treating of, is to lead us in our imprudence and



thoughtlessness from a beginning that was most noble to a miserable ending, namely, to that levity of mind which would undo all our intellectual and moral training, would cause us to pour ourselves out wholly upon exterior occupations, would render us unskilful or slothful in the ministries of the Society, would enervate and waste our strength in vain and foolish trifles.

30. To bring us to detest and shun this most pernicious spirit of levity, what could be of greater efficacy than to compare it with the true and genuine spirit with which our Holy Father Ignatius wished all the sons of the Society to be animated? And indeed this detestable spirit of which we have spoken, does not permit the great truths to take deep root in our souls: the great truths, I say, and fundamental principles of the eternal law, which as a certain and unchangeable norm, should govern the whole course of our lives. Hence it is that we feel ourselves entirely wanting in energy of action, and in courage and perseverance to carry out what we have set on foot. Hesitating, faint-hearted, fickle in our plans as well as opinions, we are easily carried away by impressions produced by objects from without. We are twisted about by what we see and hear and read, and, as says the Apostle, "like clouds without water, we are carried hither and thither by the winds." But, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers, how far removed is all this from the spirit of the illustrious Father whom God has given us as a founder, master, and model. Ignatius, as Lainez was wont frequently to say, was *a man of a few truths*, which did not ebb and flow with the tide of passion, or become obscured by the mists of contradiction. Deeply rooted in his soul, they lighted up his mind with a marvellous brightness, so that with wonderful facility he adapted and reduced them to practice, and almost at the first glance he would clearly see what was to be done in each particular case. Hence his astonishing vigor of action, and his incredible constancy in procuring and furthering the greater glory of God. These few truths went as a torch before all his actions to show the way, and not only did they preserve him from deviating even a hair's breadth from the path which led straight to God, but

they strengthened the tenacity of purpose and energy of action, which constitute as it were the special character of his sanctity. These few truths of which Father Lainez speaks, and on which were based Ignatius' fortitude and greatness of soul, are identical with those which he has commended and left to us in the divine book of the *Spiritual Exercises*. They are first, the glory of God as the aim of all our actions; and secondly, the perfect imitation of Christ, as the means of fully attaining that sublime end. On these truths he ever kept his mind intent, that under their auspicious leading he might regulate his own will and that of his sons, might guide them constantly forward to the greater glory of God. Whatever he heard, saw, read, whatever designs he conceived whether in business transactions or in dealing with so many different classes of men, it was with him a sacred duty to measure all things by these great truths, as if by the only and highest rule of all his judgments and plans.

31. From this followed also the contempt with which he regarded what was novel, vain, or trivial. His soul set on undertaking and carrying out great enterprises, felt an instinctive abhorrence for trifles, and knew not how to remain inactive. Now it is a fact well known to all and confirmed by experience, that if something is once proposed to the mind which takes a firm hold of the soul, one is no longer free to remain listless and idle, or to take pleasure in empty amusements. The soul absorbed by this one idea reacts on the will with incredible force, and urges it on persistently to action; and although for a time it may resist and struggle, in the end it will have to yield itself conquered by this invincible impulse, and to offer itself an obedient servant to the action of the soul. The more clearly and fully the mind is enlightened, the more powerful also will be the motion of the will, and the stronger the action due to their influence. But let us now look carefully at Ignatius. The design of procuring the salvation of souls and of promoting the glory of God had from the outset of his conversion so fixed itself in his mind, that it penetrated and inflamed his whole soul. Accordingly, throughout his entire life there was for

him neither rest from labor nor relaxation. He was on fire and filled with anguish on seeing peoples and nations falling away from God, and he left nothing untried to bring them back to God and keep them faithful to His service. In the performance of this mission, he was neither allured by success to divert his attention to other matters, nor on the other hand shaken by failure. Amid the most complicated business affairs, the severest trials, the fiercest persecutions, there shone out a strength of will and an unconquerable constancy of soul which enabled him to inaugurate the most difficult undertakings, pursue them with indefatigable activity, and overcoming all obstacles, to bring them at length to a happy issue. Never did he lose heart, or desist from his purpose, or even for a second waver.

This firmness of will resting for its foundation on a certain and profound knowledge of the great truths developed in the book of the Spiritual Exercises is as far removed as heaven is from earth from that levity of thought and sentiment and action which is peculiar to our times, and highly characteristic not only of men of the world but even of many religious dedicated to God.

32. Hence the fruits which the doctrines and training of St. Ignatius produced, were truly marvellous. Countless martyrs, preachers, writers, missionaries, teachers, in a word: legions of apostles have filled the whole world with their glory, and still more with the glory of God. For our holy Founder had taken care that the self-same truths that had inspired him to undertake such great things, should also breathe throughout the book of the Constitutions, whence they might be drawn by his sons and be sunk deep in their minds. He had likewise provided that the members of this body, when by their vows they unite themselves to God with bonds the most close and indissoluble, should forever renounce whatever of worldly goods they actually possessed or by whatever title ever hoped to gain possession of, lest entangled in the cares of this world, they should be prevented from bringing into play for the service of God all the resources of their energy. Nor was this enough; he further decreed that they should bind



themselves by vow to teach the christian doctrine to children and the ignorant ; and to hold themselves in readiness to go on missions to infidels and heretics without even any provision for the journey. In fine, he wished that, in the spirit of the Constitutions, "having their loins always girt," they should be ready to start whithersoever obedience might summon them in the defence of the faith or for the glory of God. Nay more, lest this noble and magnanimous spirit should ever languish or be crippled by any obstacles, he forbade us to take up any work, even pious, that might become a tie for us ; wherefore he brought it to pass that we were freed from the administration of parishes, from being regular confessors of nuns, from chanting the divine office in choir, from taking part in solemn public worship and processions ; in a word, from all ministries were they ever so holy and in themselves praiseworthy, that might hinder us from accomplishing those things which our vocation and God's will demand of us in accordance with the laws of our Institute.

33. Surely it would be most unseemly for the sons of such a father, at a time too when more than ever there is need of generous souls and stout hearts, to fall away from this lofty spirit ; to forget the sublime end for which he would have us trained and educated at the cost of so much labor and care ; to make void his wise laws in obedience to the shallow and foolish spirit of the times ; to neglect the duties of our vocation in order to pour ourselves out upon exterior things ! How could Ignatius acknowledge us as his sons if in indolent and slothful idleness we were to lounge in comfortable and well furnished rooms, wasting our time in perusing the columns of newspapers, in reading unprofitable periodicals and frivolous works of fiction, in visiting the houses of friends for the purpose of mere gossip, in going on useless journeys to satisfy a childish and eager curiosity ?

34. Yet another trap is set for us, as dangerous as it is alluring : nor is this temptation less fatal or formidable than the former. For the enemy of our souls while on the one hand he seizes every opportunity offered him by our zeal for souls to withdraw us from



the works proper to our Society ; on the other, taking advantage of those noble and lofty sentiments which make us scorn what is mean and low and strive to rise to bold and magnanimous deeds for the glory of God, he hurls us upon another dangerous rock : I mean the spirit of license, private judgment and pride.

35. This ungovernable plague of license which has seized upon all hearts and which we too, even though unwillingly, breathe with the very air, threatens to shake and shatter the very foundations of the religious life. For a century and more, not only throughout Europe but in all other countries likewise, the nations have been proclaiming a lawless liberty ; they praise it with extravagant eulogy ; they imperiously demand it as a sacred birth-right for the individual as well as for cities, countries and nations.

Hence war is declared against all authority and any attempt to put a check or limit upon liberty is fiercely resisted. Books and pamphlets filled with these pernicious teachings are daily published and whole nations are being tainted and corrupted by them ; popular assemblies, meetings of men and women re-echo with the boisterous assertion of these false doctrines. Nay, the teachings of the corrupters of the people are every day translated into lawless actions by the populace who have become convinced of their inalienable right to throw off the yoke of all laws, to criticise and amend whatsoever has been enacted by legitimate authority, to seat or unseat, by inherent right, kings and rulers ; in a word, to proclaim as a right the crime of rebellion.

36. Hence such a confusion of ideas and uncertainty of judgment have taken possession of men's minds that the terms : law, authority, right, duty, are no longer understood in their original meaning, and have come to represent quite different ideas. It would seem, for example, that supreme authority now exists not for the purpose of ruling the people and of being revered by them, but to do their bidding and be a play-thing in their hands. Again, they now-a-days oftentimes call law not what right reason dictates, but what the majority, bribed with gold or hurried away by passion or over-awed by the audacity of a handful of demagogues, commands ; no

matter how much it may clash with every right both human and divine. Rights and duties too, are no longer deduced from the divine law and the natural order, but are forced upon the rest of the people by the overbearing will of the majority, acting in accordance with that atrocious maxim of modern politics: "Might makes right." Such is the insane doctrine of our times, which has been universally accepted. The men of our times have drunk it in as with the mother's milk; they have been fed upon it, poisoned with it. And so far as we may conjecture, the present generation will for a long time to come run on in this fatal course. May their children be more fortunate!

37. If these things be true, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, and assuredly they are most true, it were criminal to disguise the danger and it would ill become us to live on unheedingly; but we must stand on guard, be watchful and exercise the utmost care lest we be infected with such poisonous teaching. For after having contaminated and subverted the whole fabric of civil and political life, this plague will naturally turn to the cloister of religious communities, where, if once it has gained an entrance, it will overturn and utterly ruin the religious life. And no wonder, for whenever an epidemic rages, not only are the lives of the feeble and delicate endangered who as a rule are the first victims of the plague; but even those who are flushed with health and strength are attacked, if through over-confidence they neglect to take precautions against the contagion. Something similar is wont to happen in the matter of poisonous doctrines: Whereas at first the poison catches and corrupts men of feeble mind and unsound judgment, who either have received little or no training in serious studies, or have already received injury from other errors; in the course of time, however, when the disease has spread far and wide and taken hold of nearly all minds, it attacks men who are gifted with sound judgment and then they too begin to lose their balance and give way to it. Now, I ask, could anything be more sad, more foolish and more harmful than to imagine oneself safely out of danger in

the very midst of all this havoc ; and to neglect the precautions by which so great a calamity may be averted ?

38. For it is a well known truth that he is most quickly overthrown who apprehends no danger and that an imaginary sense of security is the usual harbinger of disaster. Experience indeed teaches that imprudent men at first hold such errors in contempt ; next, becoming familiarized with them by hearing them repeated day after day, they abate somewhat of the abhorrence which they had conceived for them and after a while lose it entirely ; then they readily persuade themselves that though these errors are deplorable, yet, in view of the condition of the times, they have to be tolerated in order to avoid greater evils, and so they little by little reach a point when they no longer dare to reprobate the morals and manners of men with whom they live in daily, familiar and friendly intercourse. In the end they themselves will walk on the same path and adopt the same principles in life and action, never thinking that by so doing they are embracing in *practice* the very errors which in *theory* they have been condemning. Who then, even among Ours, could with any show of reason promise himself to escape unscathed from this contagion, unless he vigilantly stood on his guard ? And is there no reason to fear that this universal evil may corrupt the hearts of Ours also, and that in breathing this pestilential atmosphere we receive the germs of the deadly poison into our blood and taint our religious life at the very core ?

39. This is all the more to be dreaded because the spirit of liberty which to-day they dignify with the pretentious name of *independence*, but ought rather to call license, this spirit, I say, has taken such hold of men's minds that even children appear to be tainted with its virus. For it is a lamentable fact that so irrational is not seldom the early home training of children that infatuated parents proudly call their little boy clever and winning when in truth he is forward and impudent. The result is that when such boys reach the years of adolescence they will brook no rule but



their own judgment, chafe under authority, carp at, criticise and condemn the words and actions of their teachers and superiors. Now those who wish to enter the Society, must of course come to us out of the world just described.

40. But what a difficult task it is, after they have entered the Society, to rid themselves of and by the virtue of self-abnegation conquer the habits of early years, habits of long standing that have almost grown into a second nature ; and to implant deep in their souls the spirit of the gospel in place of the spirit of the world ! If, however, a remnant of the spirit of the world is alive in the heart, though they forswear their old errors with honest good will, yet will the presence of this spirit betray itself by their actions and the whole tenor of their lives. Now, is not this precisely the judgment that would have to be pronounced on members of our Society who in speech should make war against that unbounded and intolerable license in all things : uttering fiery denunciations against it from the pulpit and in the school-room, keeping up a sharp fight against it in private conversations, in written books and in every other way ; yet, when at home, should demand for themselves, by their way of acting, that same inordinate and intemperate liberty which in words they rebuke and denounce : refusing to bear the yoke and submit to the guidance of obedience, discussing and criticising the actions of Superiors, carping at their commands and precepts and placing obstructions in the way of their freedom of government ? What would be the good of upholding and championing in pulpit and Professor's chair the divine origin of authority, the sacred and inviolable obligation of obeying God's law as the only safe-guard of human society, if, at the same time, by our actions and our whole conduct as religious, we were to regard the Superior merely as a man more or less prudent and experienced, and not as God's minister and the herald of His will, whose orders we need not reverence as God's commands, but may call to the bar of our private judgment as human injunctions ; and obey or disregard them as it suits our whim ? Should



not one who were to act thus be rightly called an enemy of liberalism in theory, its champion in practice ; a Catholic in word, a liberal in deed ; a Catholic in the pulpit, a liberal at home ; a Catholic writer, a liberal religious ?

41. Now if all this is thought so monstrous and incredible that it can never come to pass in our Society ; yet surely we must not have such an over-weening confidence in our own virtue as to dismiss all fear of being touched even by a breath of this spirit of unbridled liberty. For in very truth, let me ask you, what judgment would you pass on those who should not await with becoming calmness and holy indifference the assignment of places and employments ; who should shrink from *a life hidden in Christ Jesus*, a life of self-abnegation ; who should set aside the direction of Superiors in order to be guided only by their own judgment ; who should attempt to bring his orders into harmony with the desires and hankerings of self-love, wresting his will to their own and endeavoring to make him command what is agreeable to themselves ? And if they were to accept with bad grace unpleasant and irksome orders ; if they were to grow sad and querulous on being thwarted in their wishes ; if discouraged when uncongenial employments are given, or a method of working prescribed which they do not fancy : what else would all this be than the seeds of the disease which has poisoned the whole atmosphere and threatens to invade and contaminate even religious Communities ?

42. Now, dearest Fathers and Brothers, if ever there was anything contrary to the spirit of our Institute, surely it is this way of thinking and acting. For the rock-bottom of our vocation is the spirit of humility ; and the most perfect obedience is the characteristic and the badge, so to speak, by which Ours are unmistakably recognized : Hence the spirit of our Institute could not encounter a more implacable enemy than this false liberty, which flaunting in the fair garb of loftiness of character has everywhere raised up and propagated a spirit of pride and rebellion.

Therefore our Blessed Father Ignatius spared no pains to keep

far from the thresholds of our houses this deadly scourge and to pluck up from our hearts the last roots of the poisonous weeds, using for this purpose the most efficacious means that could be found. For he turned against this enemy that most powerful weapon, the thirty Days' Spiritual Exercises, prescribing that the exercitant should not begin the work of the choice of a state of life or of reformation of the state already embraced till his soul was cleansed from all stain of sin, the inordinate cravings of sensual and worldly pleasures were subdued, and he experienced a readiness to embrace, if it were the will of God, all sorts of insults and outrages, in order that he might follow the more closely in the footsteps of Christ our Lord. He thoroughly understood how we shrink from humility and crave the empty honors of the world, and therefore, as soon as the meditations and other exercises of the first week are over, he bends all his efforts and gives his whole care, during the rest of the month, to the difficult task of conquering and overthrowing the formidable fortress of pride. To this subject pertain the exercises on the Kingdom of Christ, Two Standards, Three Classes of men, Three Degrees of Humility, all those on the Life of Christ and particularly on His Passion and Death, which he offers to our consideration and meditation for nearly an entire month. For he was firmly convinced that this stronghold once taken and destroyed, our victory would be assured; whereas all our efforts would prove unavailing as long as it stood whole and intact: for the reason that inordinate self-love and a vicious craving for honor and distinction cannot stand with a true and sincere zeal for God's glory.

Hence he forbade that any one should be admitted into the Society unless he had taken the firm resolve to practise self-renunciation, or had at least formed the wish of taking such a resolution. "Let them be questioned whether they experience within themselves desires so salutary and so conducive to the perfection of their souls. But if any one owing to the weakness and misery of nature should not experience in himself any such ardent desires

in the Lord, let him be further asked if at least he wishes to have such desires." <sup>(9)</sup>

43. And those that had been received and were serving Christ in the Society, he would more easily suffer "to be surpassed by other religious orders in fasting, watching and other austerities in food and clothing, which each according to its own institute and rule holily adopts; but in true and perfect obedience and abnegation of will and judgment he greatly desired that they should be conspicuous . . . , and that the true and genuine progeny of the same Society should as it were be distinguished by this mark." <sup>(10)</sup>

And because St. Ignatius would have this virtue constitute the natural complexion and color of the Society, in as much as its whole life and activity are centred around this virtue and ruled by it, therefore he was not satisfied with having made on this point most wise laws in the Constitutions, he also wrote that admirable letter, than which, I am convinced, it is impossible to write anything more exhaustive or complete on the virtue of Obedience. Everything bearing on the doctrine and practice of this virtue is expounded and set forth in this letter with a wisdom that is more than human, so much so that anyone who is really desirous of understanding and bringing home to himself the inmost nature of religious obedience, will find therein teachings of the rarest wisdom and of the highest perfection. For the most precious and the noblest part of man, the will I say and the judgment, is to be wholly offered up to God, so that the Superior's will and judgment shall be the only rule of our will and judgment. Nay, he deemed this entire submission of the intellect so necessary in obedience that he did not hesitate to declare that they who did what they were bid while disagreeing in judgment, stood with only one foot in the Society.

44. What then, think you, would be our Holy Father's opinion of this modern spirit of liberty, or, to speak more truly, of license which makes it an ordinary rule of action not to subject our will to the

<sup>(9)</sup> Ex. Gen. cap. iv. §§ 44, 45.

<sup>(10)</sup> Ep. de virt. Obed. § 3.



Superior but the Superior's will to our own, or rather the Superior himself to us? How intolerable it would seem to him if the wishes and commands of Superiors were subjected to disrespectful criticism, and whatever clashed with our views, were freely disparaged and rejected! What would be his forebodings! How great his fears for the Society! May God in His mercy ward off from our most loving mother this destructive spirit, for if ever it were to get a foot-hold amongst us, it would in a short time bring the Society to the brink of ruin. He who by His grace has called us to the Society and in His mercy keeps us in the same and leads us on to the blessed goal of His glory; He also, may we not cherish the firm hope? will ever shield and protect against the assaults of so hideous an enemy this holy city that bears the Blessed name of Jesus. Yet, I will not conceal my fears, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers: Whenever I think and reflect how foul is the atmosphere which we are breathing, how many the dangers of defilement to which this universal pestilence might expose our Society, I am greatly alarmed; and full of apprehension I lift up suppliant eyes and hands to heaven, praying God from the bottom of my heart that He may never permit us to fall away from the true spirit of our Holy Father and may not suffer the Society to perish forever by an inglorious death.

45. For what I dread most are not enemies and perils from without: persecutions, spoliations, exiles, and whatever foes there are that plot our destruction. As long as our holy Founder's spirit abides within us as a living force and we consequently have reason to count upon God's grace which never fails those who with sincere faith "seek the kingdom of God and its justice," all such adversities will but ground us more firmly and more deeply in humility and strip us of all love and regard for the things of earth. This is proved by the history of more than three hundred years and especially by the experience of our own times, when the Society, though exiled from so many countries, driven from her homes, despoiled of her property, robbed of many of her martyred



sons, has not only withstood and survived all disasters, but also, a marvellous and almost incredible thing ! has been blessed with such a happy increase that she has expanded over land and sea to the ends of the earth.

46. But if this worldly spirit of unbridled liberty, knocking at our gates, were allowed to creep in among us, grow up and canker our hearts, cripple the life of self-renunciation and obedience which we lead, and little by little destroy it ; the Society then would cease to long for death at the hands of the persecutor, the death by which martyrs die, but worn away by intestine disease and wasted by the slow rot of decay, would perish unpitied and sink into an unhonored grave. For the bond of union that holds together Superiors and subjects would become loosened and would soon be snapt, and in place of that mutual charity which is now the strongest protection and the brightest ornament of the Society, would succeed distrust, quarrels, dissensions, party-spirit, insincerity of tongue and countenance, hypocrisy, trickery, deceit, and appeals to outsiders in order to thwart the Superior's freedom of action. All these fatal results, the inevitable outcome of that execrable and pernicious spirit, would shake the edifice of the Society to its very foundation, and would be sufficient of themselves, without the intervention of persecutions and violent attacks from without, to undermine and overthrow it. From what has just been said we may readily infer, in the first place, why our Holy Father Ignatius so earnestly recommended humility and obedience, since upon these virtues depends the spiritual life of the individual as well as the security and strength of every religious community and particularly of the Society ; and in the second place, why the enemy of the human race, to-day more fiercely than ever before, applies his engines to the blasting of the rock of humility and obedience : for this keen observer of times and circumstances knows full well that if our mother is to be conquered at all, it cannot be accomplished by the noisy clang of arms, but only by insidiously tempting her into conceiving a high esteem of herself.

47. And since I have touched upon this point, I pray you will suffer me, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, to call your attention to a matter of most grave and serious import. My predecessor of happy memory, Very Reverend Father Roothaan, already felt its imminent danger and dreaded it, for in his Encyclical letter "On the love of the Society and of our Institute," addressed to the Society on the 7th of July, 1830, he sharply rebukes those who, while praising humility as the virtue peculiarly proper and eminently necessary to each individual member of the Society, seem to forget it when speaking of the whole Society as a body ; as if it were lawful for the individual, without incurring the reproach of pride, to boast of what the Society has done and is doing for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. For as Father Roothaan rightly says : " Who could ever believe that a course of action which would be disgraceful for the individual and sinful in the eyes of God, should be lawful and a proof of love for the Society, if it were carried on in the name of the Society ? When the Venerable Bede says that the Church of Christ was called by its founder 'a little flock,' because 'by whatever numbers its ranks were to be swelled, it was to go on increasing in humility to the end of the world and reach unto the promised kingdom through humility,' how much more becoming is it for every congregation which is but a small part of the Church, to cherish such humble feelings ? What then shall I say of our Society ? Our holy Founder was always wont to call it 'the least Society.' For the Society being wholly bent on imitating the humility of Christ, its Captain, it has been established by its Founder on such principles and fortified by such defences, that it professes not merely to hold aloof from the glory of the world and ecclesiastical honors, but even to despise them. When our first Fathers, great and glorious men, and most deserving in the eyes of God and man, heard certain predictions of holy men commonly applied to them by the people, never for a moment would they believe that such flattering and honorable sayings could refer to themselves. The more numerous

and signal benefits they conferred on the Christian world, the more often they repeated to themselves the words of the gospel : ' We are unprofitable servants : we have done that which we ought to do.' And now that we have become so exceedingly poor and so few in numbers and surely far below our early Fathers in merit, will any one dare cherish feelings of pride, or ought he not rather to fear that the Society be humbled through his fault, for the words of eternal truth will remain true forever : ' Every one that exalts himself shall be humbled ?' Or who is so rash as to imagine that when there is question of a company of men, the opposite opinion is to be held, namely that the more such a company exalts itself, the more God will exalt it by rich gifts and blessings ? I greatly fear that those who speak most of the glory of the Society, as they call it, and who make the glory of the Society their sole theme, I fear that they are not very unlike certain people who boast of the high rank of their family in the world, but are themselves unworthy scions and very poor imitators of the glory of their ancestors. Thus one will sometimes see men lauding to the skies the association to which they belong and deeming themselves more than rich enough in the honors their predecessors have won, while they never dream of adding glory to them by their own endeavors, nay, they fancy those very honors entitle them to a life of ease and idleness."

48. Such are the words of Father Roothaan of happy memory in the above-mentioned letter ; and he more fully develops the same doctrine as follows : " Akin to the error of which I have been speaking is another that induces some through love of the Society, as they imagine, to seek especially for whatever makes the greatest show, and bids fair to win the applause of men, particularly of men of letters, and to make Ours renowned in the eyes of the world. Such men would wish, I fancy, to persuade their mother to that course of action which vain men of old would have urged on our Saviour : ' Show thyself ! Show thyself to the world !' These men, deceived, I fear, by some specious reasoning, would



rather have us *seem* than really *be* something. They prefer the shadow to the truth ; notoriety to fair deeds ; mere glitter to true public usefulness. Our lot indeed is cast in a time when good appearances alone find favor with many and are thought more of than solid work for the salvation of souls. If, however, we must needs concede something to the times to render our services less distasteful, far be it from us to take a liking to any showy emptiness, whether in the pursuit of letters, or in the preaching of the word of God, or in any other ministry of our vocation. Such vanity is entirely opposed to the spirit of the Society, whose whole aim is ever the good of our neighbor and the glory of God, not the praise of men which is deceitful and insincere and soon changes to contempt, if it be anything else but the outcome of merit. When our Fathers won the praises of men, they earned them without seeking them by their glorious deeds, and their deeds it should be our honor to ambition and imitate. Indeed, all renown and good repute then only will be to the credit of the Society, when we labor to help all classes of men in a spirit fully in keeping with our vocation, by a life of uncommon virtue, by solid learning and by works proper to our Institute, so that come what empty praise there may for what we have well done, we at least shall not have pursued that empty shadow."

49. Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers, if at all times and in all places we had heeded these grave words of Father Roothaan, uttered so long ago as the 30th year of our century, our Very Reverend Father Beckx would not have found it necessary, some years later, to insist upon religious modesty and simplicity in the erection of our buildings. Would that in our days, too, these words had not been forgotten by those of Ours who, seduced by a strange craving to be on the tongues of men, seem to have persuaded themselves that now-a-days the work of saving souls cannot be done, nor the office of preaching the word of God exercised, that our colleges cannot thrive, nor our studies flourish, unless the daily papers, public notices, glaring circulars, advertise and publish far and wide, not only what they themselves are undertaking, but also (a very sad and most



grievous thing !) matters that touch the domestic administration and government of the Society. In all this it is easy to discover the artful and dangerous frauds of the evil one.

50. A sincere and sterling love of the Society is proven not by procuring for her such empty and fleeting fame, but by winning for her true and imperishable glory. Now the undying glory of individuals as well as of societies does not consist in begging for applause but in being worthy of it, not in getting praise but in deserving it. And consequently they are attached to the Society with a true filial affection who call into play for her service all the powers and resources at their command that she may ever faithfully second the designs of God's will and press onward with rapid strides and untiring energy to the sublime goal for which she was brought into being. And this object they will fully attain if, despising the praises of men, with singleness of heart and sincerity of purpose, they shall endeavor in all our ministries, on the missions, in preaching and hearing confessions, in church and school, to make themselves acceptable to all men by constant self-denial and ardent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls : for it is from these sources that they must draw the sap of vitality.

51. Such is the genuine love of the Society, such her true glory. It was thus that our holy Father understood it and with him all those of our fore-fathers who by treading in his foot-steps proved themselves loving sons of their mother. Such too were the sentiments of those of our brothers that are ranked among the saints, who by their intrepid defence of the faith became the emulators and imitators of the apostles ; such the sentiments of that countless host of illustrious men who, with noble scorn of mortal peril, fertilized nearly all lands with their sweat and watered them with their blood. Such, in fine, to bring this long letter to a close, were the sentiments of those three noble sons of the Society raised to the honors of the altar within the last three years, Rudolph Acquaviva and his fellow-martyrs, Anthony Baldinucci and Bernardine Realino. Read their history and call to mind their glorious lives. The life of each one of them bears witness from

the beginning to the end that they proved their love for the Society and climbed the pinnacle of true fame not by vain boasting or empty show or the blare of trumpets, but by steady and devoted efforts to afford the Society every possible help toward attaining her sublime end, which is none other than the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

52. With this end in view the Blessed Rudolph bade farewell to his ancestral halls, put from him with disdain a rich patrimony, despised the honors with which the world sought to allure him, set sail for India, endured a thousand hardships in the midst of barbarous tribes, and in the end sealed with his blood the faith he had preached and thus adorned his mother's brow with a fresh martyr's crown. His four companions trod the same path, shed the same lustre upon their mother's name and well deserved to receive the same honors at the hands of Holy Church.

With this same end in view the Blessed Anthony after having passed the flower of his youth in wonderful innocence and holiness of life, became, first, a pattern of religious perfection by the exact observance of our rules and then, throwing himself heart and soul into the work of giving missions, consecrated his whole life and his every thought to the spiritual improvement of towns and villages ; nor would he ever, under the plea of fancied obstacles or the delusive hope of greater results, sacrifice one jot or tittle of the rules of our Institute. On the contrary, to escape the more surely the devil's snares and obtain from God the greater efficacy for his labors, during the twenty and more years that he exercised this sacred ministry, he never set anything on foot without the advice and guidance of his Superiors, obeyed his spiritual directors like a child, and both while resting from his labors in our houses and while preaching missions in towns and hamlets, to the unbounded edification of Ours as well as of externs, observed with the most scrupulous fidelity the very least of our rules.

So likewise the Blessed Bernardine, who spent nearly his whole life within the walls of our College of Lecce, engaged in administering the sacraments, in preaching the word of God, in teaching and di-

recting souls, in consoling the sick, in assisting the poor, ever kept this same end before his eyes. And marvellous it is what holy artifices he invented to bring the straying back to God, to strengthen the wavering, to encourage the devout and spur them on to a life of holiness. And did he ever look for human consolation, not to say idleness, or even suitable relaxation from his labors? So far from wasting a minute upon trifles or the reading of frivolous books, he generously sacrificed for God's sake even the noble talent which nature had given him for the pursuit of letters and atoned by bodily austerities for the time he had formerly given up to the charms of literature and reading for pleasure rather than profit. Thus he has left behind him for our imitation a noble example of that active and energetic life so becoming to a son of the Society.

May their examples, Reverend Fathers and dearly beloved Brothers, ever shining before our eyes and in our hearts, become beacon-lights to us whether we be employed in apostolic labors or confined within the domestic walls! May the protection of these men, whom we venerate as our brothers and admire as ornaments of the Society, may the powerful patronage of the Virgin Mother of God, on whose feast I have wished to send forth this letter, may they be to us an abundant source of heavenly graces and gifts, so that leaning upon them we may prove ourselves true sons of the Society and "walk worthy of the vocation in which we are called, with all humility . . . careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace!"<sup>(1)</sup>

I commend myself earnestly to your Holy Sacrifices and prayers.

The Servant of all in Christ,

LEWIS MARTIN, S. J.

*Rome, on the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary,  
the 4th of October, 1896.*

<sup>(1)</sup> Ephes. iv. 1-3.











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ll: Generale S.J.

Cyrtolae felidae  
Generalium



